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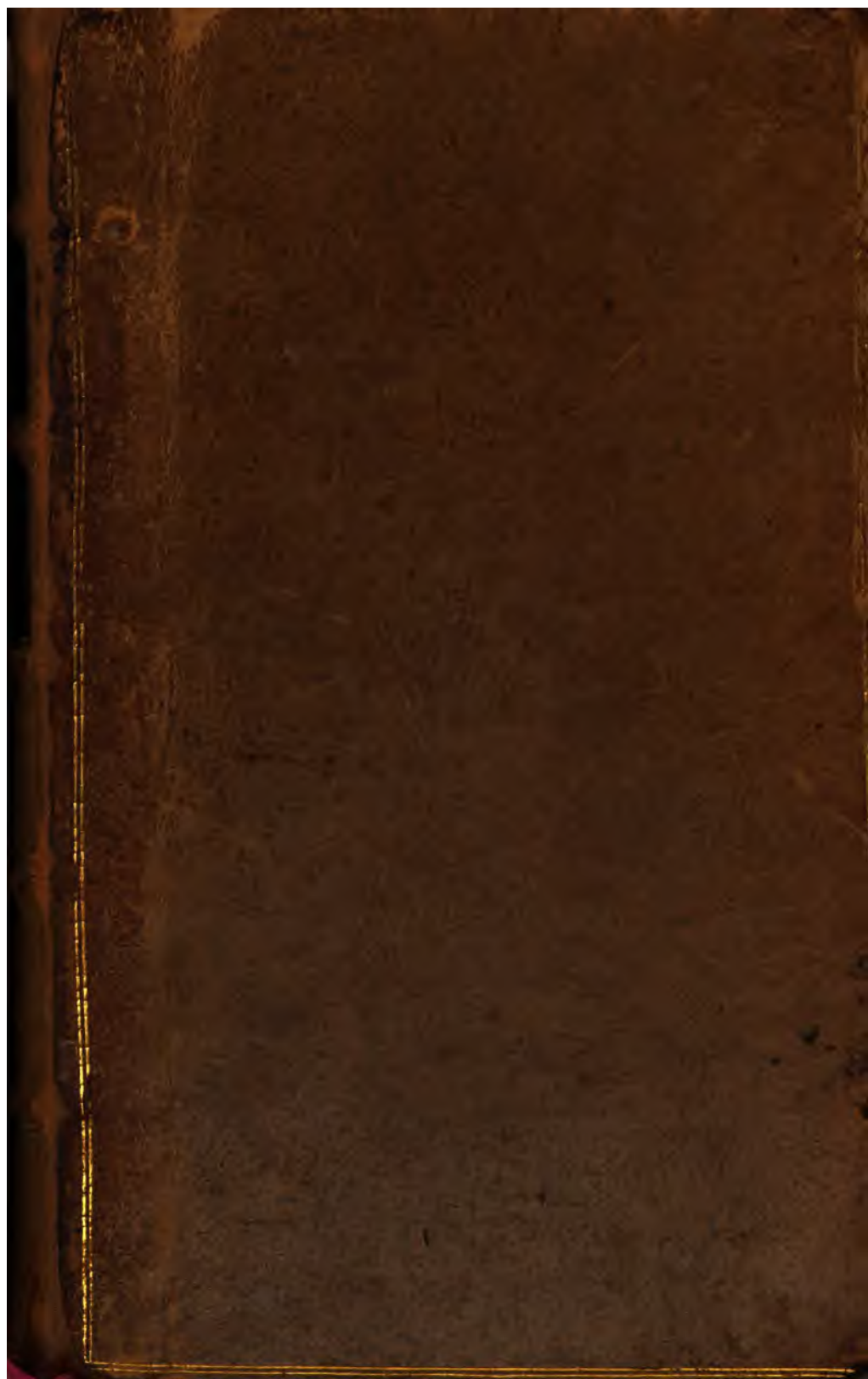
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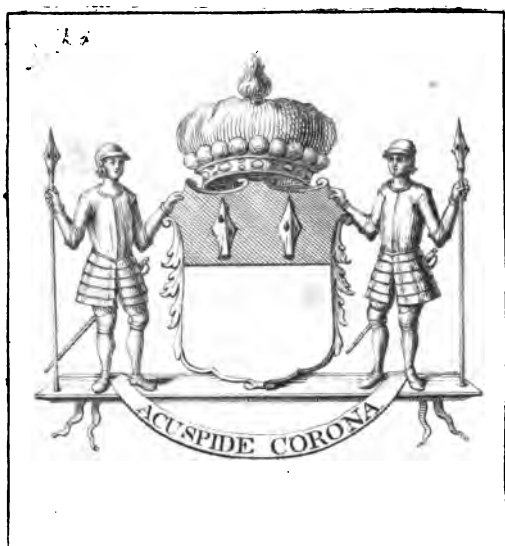
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W.H. Jackson 1927

A SHORT  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE LATE  
EXPEDITION  
TO THE  
COAST OF FRANCE,

By One who attended the EXAMINATION at WHITEHALL.

L O N D O N;

Printed for M. COOPER in *Pater-noster-Row*,  
M DCC LVII.

*good*



Stephen Spaulding  
mem. all

may 25  
10-8-45  
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A SHORT  
A C C O U N T  
OF THE LATE  
E X P E D I T I O N.

**A**S many Spurious, and I  
think very False, Ac-  
counts of the Late Expedition  
have been sent into the World,

B 2

I think

1-5 40 20.113

( 4 )

I think it will be doing Justice to the Publick, as well as to the Gentlemen concerned in the Conduct of it, to have it stated in its true Light.

And that I may not appear to do it impertinently, I have confined myself to a few short Remarks, every Circumstance of which is faithfully collected, from a strict and most impartial Attention to the Examination lately held before the Board of General Officers. When I say impartial, I must however confess, that I went to that, as I think a Man  
of

of Humanity must to all Trials, wishing rather to hear Matter of Acquittal than Censure; the more, as I could not conceive how a Set of Gentlemen, who had, during the last War, and in the most trying Actions of it, constantly distinguished themselves, as at Dettingen, Fontenoy, Melde, Culloden, and Laffeldt, should now be so totally changed, as to start at the Approach of Dangers, probably much inferior to those, of which they had before stood the actual Experience, with such remarkable Constancy.

This

This, from the first, gave me a Suspicion, that the Representations we have generally had of this Affair, have been either Maliciously or Negligently made. With these Thoughts, and in this Spirit, I came to the Examination at Whitehall, which was so publick, and to my Apprehension so satisfactory, that I came away convinced, it was impossible to find a Difference of Opinion upon it: at least, as far as the Determination of the First Council of War; to which I shall confine my Observations at present, but the various Opinions I have since heard on that subject,

subject, have made me resolve to put together, as shortly and clearly as I can, the Chief Heads of that Evidence which appeared upon it, and transmit them plainly and faithfully to the Publick,

1st, Then it appeared by the Papers and Examination, particularly those of L. C. Cl—ke and Joseph Thierri the Pilot, that the freshest Intelligence there was relative to the State of Rochfort before the Embarkation of the Troops, was of three Years and an half old: viz in April 1754. when L. C. C---ke was there: the Pilot not having been there for some Years before.

2. That



2dly, That the Coast and Nature of the Landing in the Road of Basques were intirely unknown, as also the Country in the Neighbourhood. The particular State of the Troops and Garrison, &c.

3dly, That the Expedition was sent out on the Footing of a *Coup de Main*, or *Surprize only*.

4thly, That this was plain from the Government's fearing to get any new or better Intelligence, *lest the Secret should be discovered*.

5thly, That the Embarkation  
was

was delayed near two Months after the Troops were assembled in the Isle of Wight.

6thly, That during that Time there was undoubted Intelligence received, that the Alarm was already spread along the Coast of France from Brest and St. Malos to Rochelle and Rochfort, particularly by Letters and Advices from Capt. Cleveland and Capt. Proby, ——— by one taken on Board the Emerald a French Man of War and brought into the Fleet: And by many Neutral Vessels from those Parts during the Voyage.

C

7. That

7. That the Fleet first appeared off the Isle of Oleron on the 20th September. That it was the 23d in the Morning before they got in. That the Isle of Aix was taken the same Day. That on the 24th a Plan was given in for attacking the Fort of Fouras by Sea and Land; at the same time making a Diversion on the Side of Rochelle, &c. This Plan was agreeable to the General's own Ideas, and approved by him, but failed doubly by the Declaration of the Sea Officers, *That Fouras could not be attacked by Sea*, and by the Report of the Rear

( 11 )

Rear Admiral and Captains sent to sound and reconnoitre the Coast, *that there was no Landing near Fouras.*

8. That the Report of the said Sea Officers was made on the 24th in the Afternoon, and that the Council of War met next Morning the 25th.

9. That by this Report it appeared they had discovered no other Landing Places but two, both of them near the Point of Chatellaillon, on *the open Road.*

10. That no Man of War  
C 2 could

could lie up *within two Miles* of those Places to *assist the Landing* or *secure the Retreat*.

11. That if the Wind came to the West, which was now daily expected, with Blowing Weather, being near the Time of the Equinox, *All Communication with the Fleet would be cut off*. This appears in the Opinion of the First Council of War, signed by the three Admirals and the eldest Captain in the Fleet; and by the Deposition of the ablest Pilot there.

And how important that Article

ticle was thought from the first, appears by a Paper delivered to the General by the present Commander in chief of his Majesty's Forces, containing his Observations upon this Scheme in these Words.

*A safe and well secured Communication between the Camp and the Sea, from whence you are to receive your Supplies of all Kinds is absolutely necessary, the whole depends upon it. This Paper was delivered in at the Examination, and certainly did Honour to the Judgment of that Respectable Person.*

12. There

12. There were Sand Hills on the shore, at the Place of Landing, said to be equivalent to an Entrenchment, behind which a few Hundred Men doing their Duty, might prevent a Descent of about 1500 or 2000 Men, which was all the Boats could contain at a time, who could not use their Arms, and were unprotected by the Cannon of the Ships.

13. More Troops than were sufficient for that purpose were seen by the Rear Admiral and Captains who went to sound and  
re-

---

reconnoitre the Coast on the 23d and 24th. There was a Battery on the Shore there, but that was not an Obstacle insisted on.

Thus it stood with regard to the Landing. — With Regard to the Attack of the Place it appeared, 1. That the Design being for a Coup de Main, there was not Artillery sufficient for a regular Attack, as the chief Engineer declared at the council of War.

His Words are, *That he does not imagine any regular Attack*  
*was*



*was intended against that (Rochfort) or any other Place ; the small Quantity of Artillery we have not being sent on that Plan.*

2. As to the State of Rochfort, there was, by the Accounts of Col. C--ke and the Pilot, a large and high Rampart of Earth, round the Place, faced with Stone ; the Ditch was wet from the River Side, each way, for a considerable Part of the Circumference ; but then the Works were, in most Parts, only flanked with Redans ; and there was a Part by the River where the Rampart discontinued, the  
Space

Space of 60 Yards, according to the Pilot; or of *a Front*, according to the Engineer ;--who also said the Ditch was imperfect in several Places.

On the other Hand, it appeared by the Engineer's own Account, that this Opening was in the low marshy Ground, by the River Side, and already cut with deep muddy Ditches into which the Tide flowed. As also that a good Entrenchment might be thrown up there in 24, or at most 36 Hours Time: There was already, by the Pilot's Account, a Pallifade there.---And there were five Ships in the River,

D                      whose

whose Cannon would scour that Part at half Musquet-shot; all which, with the morassy Ground and Ditches, would make that stronger against a Coup de Main or Assault, than any Part of the Rampart.

As to the Rampart, the Height of it was not exactly known, tho' of the utmost Consequence, *the Dependence being on an Esplanade*, which C. C--ke laments in his Letter that he omitted; as he imagined it was about 25 Foot high, but, as others said, 30, 'tis probable therefore, that the Ladders, good Part of which  
were

were but of 25 Feet, would have been too short.

As to the Ditch, it was proved by two positive Witneffes before the Council of War, that it was wet, or could be flowed with Water all round.

Viz. Monf. Bonneville Volunteer declared, *That there are Shuices there, by which they can flow the Ditch, and that it was full of Water all round when he was there.*

The Pilot of the Neptune faid,  
*That he had commanded a small*  
D 2 *Veffel*

*Vessel there many Years, that they have Sluices near the Hospital, by which they can fill the Ditch with Water; that they raise them sometimes to cleanse the Ditch; and that he has seen Water in it quite round the Town.*

The chief Engineer also declared, being asked, Whether, *if the Ditch were filled with Water, the Place could be escaladed? That he thought not.*

To this must be added, that though the Ditch could not be flowed all round, the Success  
of

of the Escalade was equally desperate.

For first, These Operations are never undertaken but on the Footing of a Surprise, whereas that Idea had been long vanished.

There had been an Alarm on the Coast a great while: It was now the fifth Day since our Fleet had appeared; the Troops could probably not have landed till next Day, and must have taken another, at least, to march up to the Place, being 10 or 12 Miles, which would make seven  
Days

Days from the Time the Fleet had been actually seen on this Coast.

2dly, The Garrison was not exactly known, but must have been very considerable; there were, at least, some regular Battalions; there are Marines always there (when C. C--ke was there, in Time of Peace, there were 1000) there is a Burgher's Guard always mounted, and there are great Numbers of Men in the Place used to Arms.

The Dock-men are very numerous, and the Crews of the  
Ships

Ships alone, then in the River, if complete, amounted to near 3000 Men, besides either Troops or Militia of the Country that could be thrown in : Whereas our Army for the Attack was only 10 Battalions, consisting of 7,494 fighting Men, according to the Embarkation Return, including 186 Sick.

And, 3dly, The Nights were light as Day, so that both our March and all our Motions must be discovered by the Enemy.

To which I must add one Circumstance I had omitted,  
flew-



shewing, beyond Doubt, that actual Preparations were for some Time making there. This is the Postscript of a Letter found in the Priest's House when the Isle of Aix was taken, and is as follows.

Dated from Rochfort, 18 Sept.  
1757.

*La saison est trop avancée pour que les Enemis entreprennent quelque chose sur nos Côtes, mais les Precautions de Mons. notre Gouverneur n'en sont pas Moins Bonnes. —*

*In English—The Season is too far advanced for the Enemy to undertake any Thing on our Coast: but the Precautions our Governor takes are not less Good.*

Thus it stood with Regard to the Surprize of Rochfort, the Question before the Council of War being, Whether a Landing should be made, which could be for that Purpose only, and with that Prospect of success, while neither the Communication with the Ships, nor the Retreat of the Troops were in any Way provided for; but if that were impracticable, as well as the regular Attack,

E                      which

which has been shewn; neither was it more practicable to destroy the Docks, Magazines, Arsenals, &c. our Mortars and Artillery being quite insufficient for that Purpose, as the chief Engineer declared before the Board of General Officers; where, being asked by the President, Whether if *Rochfort had been found too strong to be taken by a Coup de Main, you could not have destroyed the Magazines and Store-houses?* He says,

*To do it in any tolerable Degree would require five times the Number of Mortars we had with*

*us, and such a Method would both take up Time, and there would likewise be great Difficulties in bringing up sufficient Stores for that Purpose to the Place, the Distance by Land from Chatelaillon to Rochfort being reckoned 10 or 12 Miles,*

From this short State of Facts, I have shewn, I think, that the several following Propositions are undeniable, as connected with the direct March to Rochfort from Chatelaillon, which was the only Question then before the Council (that of Fouras and the Forts having at that Time

D 2

been

been laid aside, for the Reasons above mentioned.) viz.

1st, That the Attack of Rochfort by Escalade was quite hopeless.

2d, That it was impossible to surprize it.

3d, That there was not Artillery to attack it in Form.

4. That it was equally impracticable, without taking it, to destroy the Docks or Magazines.

And, 5th, That the Retreat  
of

of the Troops was no Way secured.

From whence I think it will plainly appear where the Failure of the Expedition did not ly, namely in the Resolution of the Council of War of the 25th of September, unanimously, and I think wisely made by all the superior Officers, of both the Land and Sea Service.

Where it did ly, whether in any Defect of the Plan, which I am not willing to suppose, or in such unforeseen, and perhaps unavoidable Circumstances as  
have

have defeated all our Expeditions to the Coast of France, I will not determine.---

I shall not enter now into the Consideration of the Things proposed, and debated after this in the several Meetings of the Generals and Admirals, my View being, in this short Sketch, to set the World right in regard to the first steps taken, and to the Opinion of the first Council of War. —

When the subsequent Transactions come, at a proper Time, to be cleared up, I am persuaded  
there

there will not be less Reason, with respect to them, also to think well both of the Judgment and Intentions of those to whom his Majesty committed the Conduct of the late Expedition: I reserve this for a second Part, if my honest Pains to discover Truth by a simple deduction of Facts, shall be thought worthy the Attention of the Publick.

**F I N I** *ten*





THE  
EXPEDITION  
AGAINST  
ROCHEFORT

Fully STATED and CONSIDERED.

IN A  
LETTER

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE the

AUTHOR

OF THE

CANDID REFLEXIONS

ON THE

REPORT

OF THE

GENERAL OFFICERS, &c.

---

By a COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

---

*Have we not decreed Ten Colonels, Ten Generals, Ten  
Aids de Camp, and Two Commanders of Horse?  
Yet what do they perform? You form Colonels and  
Aids de Camp for the Forum, not for the War.*

FRANCIS DEMOSTHENES.

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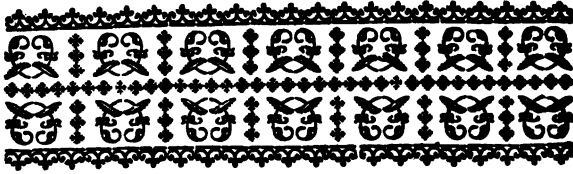
The Second Edition, with Additions.

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A

# LETTER, &c.

S I R.


 O U may, perhaps, be a little surprised at receiving a Letter from me : Persons of my Description are not easily found in the Circle of your Acquaintance, and you will be puzzled to guess my Name ; but no Matter what is my Name, or what my Acquaintance with you : I might as well ask who that Friend in the Country was to whom you have thought fit to address your Letter. I have lived a good many Years among those who are called Country Gentlemen, and never found that you had a single Friend among them ; they knew you too well : Let us cease therefore to enquire what was your Correspondent, either when you

A 2

wrote

wrote your own, or when you receive this Letter. We both have our Reason for the manner of Address.

You will wonder, perhaps, by what Means I have traced this Performance Home to you. Whatever I am, I claim no Title, I form no Pretensions to superior Sagacity, or to a more extensive Intelligence, than others who bear the same Character, which I, perhaps, assume; but the Tree is known by its Fruits, and the Piece often betrays the Workman. Whether the Performance is of the Hand of the Great Master himself, or whether it has only been sketched out by him, and work'd up by some inferiour Artist, I am not Connoisseur enough to determine, but I know the School. The World was enriched last Winter with so many *Tests*, and so many other curious Pieces in the same Taste, that it is impossible not to find out the Hands: To you therefore I address myself, as to the great Fountain and Source, without considering whether you have conveyed your Poison through your own masterly Pen, or transfused it into the Quill of some less noble, tho' still perhaps truly noble, Disciple.

Your Appearance on this Occasion justifies the Advice you give to your Friend in the 43d

Page

Page of your great Work. *Imagine specifically what is most agreeable to common Sense, and then do not be surpris'd at finding the Event diametrically opposite to it.* In the Name of that Common Sense, what have you, or any of your Faction, to do, in being the Partizans of those Persons who are the Objects of this Report, whose Unpopularity might, for a Time perhaps, have eclipsed even yours, *unless* you were originally a Party in their Offence, and from thence are become bound to be a Party in their Justification. Those who think you have a Right to the Attribute of Common Sense, must be persuaded that you are involved in this unfortunate Description. Mankind, indeed, had heard of the extraordinary Assiduity with which you attended the General in C——f, from the Moment of his Return, to that of his Trial; and that you were employed in the arduous Business of drawing up his Defence: Yet they were disposed to hope, that this proceeded only from the Warmth of Friendship, and if your Discretion suffered in the Opinions of the over-prudent you was recompensed by the Honour which was reflected on your Humanity. Why then would you not suffer it to rest on a Foundation so advantageous to you? Why would you confirm the Imputations which Mankind, had with too much Appearance of Plausibility thrown

thrown out upon you, that you and *yours* were the real Authors of that disgraceful Disappointment which the Nation so deeply feels and resents, and that the Generals who have hitherto born the Infamy, were but the Puppets which you and *yours* have actuated.

You say, Page the 29th. “ The Unpromisingness of this Expedition was not judged of only by the Event, but Numbers here, on knowing its Destination for the Coast of *France*, and the Constitution of Things in those Parts, made even no Merit of *pronouncing boldly*, that *nothing would*, or could be done by that grand Armada.” Once more in the Name of Common Sense, why do you, of all Men living, bring this Circumstance back to People’s Memory. It was well observed at the Time, and did not pass without the natural Comment, that a certain Set of Men, not famous for their extensive Knowledge, did, even long before the Squadron failed, declare publicly, and offer any Wager, that *wheresoever* was its Destination, *nothing would* be done by it. Mankind were astonished at the *Boldness* with which this was pronounced. They proceeded so far as to draw from this *Boldness* a very ill Omen of the Success. They went still farther; for to this were entirely  
owing

ing those Suspicions, or as you say Page 9th.  
 “ those treasonable Insinuations, that a Ten-  
 “ dernefs for *H—n—r* might occasion an  
 “ Armament to be sent out with Intimations,  
 “ properly given, that nothing being done  
 “ would not be the most displeasing Thing  
 “ imaginable.” They observed, that the Per-  
 sons who thus *pronounced* with so much *Boldness*,  
 were the same, who, by their private In-  
 trigues and Cabals, had a few Months before  
 thrown the Affairs of the King and Kingdom  
 into so much Confusion; and it seemed no  
 great Refinement in Politicks to suppose,  
 that the same Influence which enabled them  
 then to put a Stop to all Publick Business,  
 might still subsist to such a Degree, as would  
 blast the Expedition; for they knew very  
 well, as you say, Page 7th, “ The Envy of  
 “ some, who oppose the present Minister’s  
 “ Rise to Power, would be carried to such  
 “ treasonable Lengths, as secretly to thwart  
 “ and countermine his Operations.” Has  
 the Event proved that they were mistaken in  
 this Apprehensions? Or will this Book of  
 yours prove it?

You tell us, Page the 21st, “ That his  
 “ Royal Highness the Duke greatly desired  
 “ and pressed this Measure, in Hopes of its  
 “ making a powerful Diversion;” and you  
 refer



refer us as for a Voucher to the *Enq.* Page 20." I have read that Page in the *Enquiry* again and again, and I find nothing to warrant such an Assertion ; I see, indeed, in that Page, that Sir *J. Ligonier* informs the Commander in chief of the Land Forces, what was one Point in the King's View in this Measure, " that it was to create a Diversion in Favour " of his R. H. and the K. of *Prussia*, and " that the K. of *Prussia* desired and pressed " this *very* Measure : " But I find no Intimation that it was the Duke's Desire. I find no Reason to suppose that the Plan had been communicated to him, or approved by him, much less recommended or pressed by him for Execution. I most heartily wish it had ; for though it is possible you and I might differ in our Reasons, we shall both agree in one Conclusion. That a Plan approved and recommended by his R. H. would not have so shamefully failed without any Attempt to execute it.

You tell us, Page 7, that on the Return of the Fleet, " *Some merely guided by private* " *Attachments*, or Prejudices in Favour of " the Projectors, or at least the principal " Promoter of the Attempt, extolled it to " the Skies, and that on the other Hand, " others, *perhaps*, influenced by Considerations

" tions of the like private Nature, by Pique,  
 " Prejudice, or Envy, treated the whole  
 " Plan as chimerical, crude, indigested, both  
 " in the Projection and Appointment of the  
 " Execution, from which no better, or other  
 " Success, could be expected than what befel  
 " it. That *the whole of it* was the Scheme of  
 " a Man who wanted to value himself upon  
 " what he did not understand, and who,  
 " rather than do nothing, would do some-  
 " thing which was worse than nothing."  
 One should have supposed that an Author of  
*Candid Reflexions* would at least have taken  
 Care to steer between these two partial Opinions,  
 which you yourself represent as the  
 Extreme on either Side. And yet there is  
 not a Line in your whole Candid Performance,  
 which does not tend to support this  
 Virulence against the Minister.

But tho' you have undertaken to attack, I  
 shall not undertake to defend him : I am not  
 commissioned to it : I am not sufficiently  
 apprised of those Facts which justify the  
 Plan of the Expedition ; but what I un-  
 dertake to prove is, that you have no Facts,  
 or at least you produce none, on which it  
 ought to be condemned. Prejudiced, doubt-  
 less, I am, and Prejudice will insinuate it-  
 self into the Mind of every Disputant, and  
 every Reader. You think, for Instance, not  
 B only.

only that the Generals who commanded the Expedition are to be justified *in having done no more*, but that they are in some Degree blameable *for having done so much*, for the Plan was wild, chimerical, and absurd. You are satisfied from the Reputation of the Generals, that if the Fault had not lain in the Plan, there could have been no Failure in the Execution. I, on my Part, am persuaded that a Plan (no Matter who projected it) approved on the utmost Deliberation by His Majesty, and unanimously approved by his Cabinet-Council, undertaken on a full Examination of Facts, by these very Generals, without Protest or Remonstrance, approved and desired by the King of Prussia (for the King of Prussia, we find, *Enq.* p. 20, desires and presses this very Measure) and prepared under the immediate Inspection of Sir *John Ligonier*, then, as well as now, Commander in Chief of the King's Forces, could not be a Project so totally repugnant to Common Sense, as you chuse to represent it. These, indeed, are Names which make a different Impression on you and me. Your Opinion of his \*\*\*\*, or at least your Representation of him, is perhaps apt to vary with Circumstances. When he submits to be directed by you and yours, he is every thing that is great and noble: But if he displeases you or yours, we need go

no farther for your Sentiments than to that famous Manuscript, which has been, so busily, and yet so 'cautiously handed about, wherein he is represented as deceiving the whole World, exposing his favourite Son, as betraying the Safety of his E.—l Territories, the Possessions of his Subjects, the Honour of his Arms, his Family, and his Name, for the Sake of preserving his private Treasures, and avoiding the Expence of an Army necessary for the Defence of his Country, which he so often and so solemnly had declared was an effective Army, and yet in Fact never subsisted hardly even upon Paper. How false this Assertion was, subsequent Events have proved. As to the King of *Prussia*, we all know how much his military Skill has been, with great Uniformity, derided by you and your favourite Heroes : A Man, wild, impetuous, impracticable, ignorant of the Art of War, and as unqualified to be a General as Mr. *Pitt* is to be a Minister. The present Commander in Chief of the *British* Troops we know too, is no Favourite with you and *yours*. The People of this Country have indeed long considered him as the first Soldier, tho' till lately a very subordinate Officer in the Service. They will never forget the Services he has done this Country. *British* Armies, with their General,

saved from instant Destruction, by his superior Skill in his Profession, by his Capacity to see, and his Readiness and Alertness to seize an Advantage over his Enemy, will ever endear him to the Friends of *England*, and the Royal Family. But perhaps this very Merit, which will never be forgot by his grateful Country, will never be forgiven by Individuals.

Page 11th and 12th, your first Objection seems to be the Constitution of the Board of Enquiry. You adopt an Expression, which perhaps you first suggested to the General, *That it was a Proceeding not quite common.* And you suggest your Doubts about the Legality, as well as Propriety of such an Enquiry. I will answer this fully, at least *ad Hominem*. The first Institution of a Board of General Officers for the Purpose of enquiring into the Conduct of a Commander, took Place under the Auspices of his Royal Highness *William Duke of Cumberland*, at that time Commander in Chief of the *British* Forces: An Officer was judged, *condemned*, and ruined by such a Board of Enquiry, *without any other Trial*. Would you have any other Answer to this Objection? Or shall I comment upon it? Or make Comparisons? But if ever such an Enquiry was  
right

right and proper, it was so in the present Case, where the Parties to be tried had agreed upon a total Suppression of Evidence. In the very Council of War, which unanimously resolved to do nothing, far from a Desire to state the Evidence on which they proceeded, and their respective Opinions upon that Evidence, which one would think natural to every one who was solicitous for his Honour and Justification, the first Thing resolved on was to take no Minutes of Opinions, and that even the Informations of the Persons examined, should not stand Part of the Minutes, so as to be *transmitted to any Person*; *Enq.* p. 10. Here then, as far as in them lay, was a total Suppression of Evidence.

But, says one of the Generals, I do not conceive myself answerable for an Opinion given at a Council of War: Therefore it may be urged why are Minutes of what passes there necessary? I confess I am sorry to find this Doctrine so much received among Officers, that they are not responsible for Opinions given at a Council of War, because the Nature of Mankind is too apt to persuade them, that there can be no Fault where there is not a Possibility of Punishment. I therefore will never admit this Doctrine in the Extent it is often urged. Criminally  
re-

responsible for his Opinion no Officer can be, because it is not an Offence against any Articles of War; But what then? Is the Opinion, on the Evidence on which it is founded to be suppressed? And is not an Officer responsible to his King and Country in any other Place than a Court Martial? God forbid that such a Doctrine should be established.

A Court Martial which judges upon the Letter of the Law, upon the strict Words of Articles of War, or a penal Act of Parliament, may acquit of capital Crimes a Conduct which nevertheless evinces the Officers, who have been guilty of it, to be unfit for any future Command. It is the Words of positive Laws, which in a free Country are to make Men liable to Punishments; but it is the Prerogative of the Crown to judge, upon the whole of the Circumstances, who are fit to continue in its Service, and to command its Armies,

But you are not satisfied with the Personages appointed to form this Board, and in an Ironical Paragraph, Page 11, you insinuate how unfit they were to judge of such a Matter, by telling us what Qualifications were necessary to such Judges. Before I consider their  
Qua-

Qualifications, let me ask you a Question; Who do you think appointed them? The King, you will doubtless say: It was his Prerogative. But who do you think recommended them? I ask this of you, because I am persuaded *your Intelligence on this Head* is better than mine. But I will tell you who, I verily believe, did not recommend them: I believe Mr. *Pitt* did not; and the World, when they read those respectable Names, will not be of Opinion, that, considering the known and declared Friendships, Connections and Attachments of the *Majority of them*, they were precisely *the three Men* on whose Decision Mr. *Pitt* would willingly rest a Point, which many of his Enemies, and you at the Head of them, endeavoured to make a Point, on which his Capacity as a Minister was to be determined. Whatever Qualities they had, or had not, to fit them for the Judges in such an Enquiry, they certainly had no Partiality in Favour of the Projectors of, and against those who ought to have executed the Plan of the Expedition. As to their Capacity and Knowledge of Service, when I consider and contemplate the glorious List of Heroes, to whose Command the Army of this Country has been for so many Years confided, I confess myself at a Loss, thro' the infinite Variety of Choice, to  
point



point out the Persons whose consummate Knowledge might give the greatest Weight to their Decision: yet I say, and I say it seriously, that if Experience, such as the Armies of this Country can give, founded upon strong manly Sense, an active Spirit, and a penetrating Sagacity, can qualify a Man to judge in a Question of this Sort, it was to be found among those who sat at this Board of Enquiry.

Before I proceed to consider the Conduct of the Generals, &c. I shall follow you in some of your previous Steps, tho' they are not Steps in which I delight to walk. In order to form a Judgment on the Practicability of the Measure, you are sensible a Question will occur to every Man; What was the Force which our Troops were likely to meet at, and after their Descent? To make this favourable to your Point, you are pleased to avail yourself, p. 13, 14, of Accounts, which you think fit to inform us were circulated in *Holland*, and other neutral Countries, of the State of the Troops of *France*, which were said to amount to 300,000. The Mémorial delivered in by Authority makes them something less than 200,000. You say you don't dispute the Truth of this Account, but you insinuate the general Opinion to be, that they are above 300,000 Regulars.

lars. But the military Lists of *France*, you say, are open, and it would be unpardonable not to have a thorough Knowledge of that Point. But pray, Sir, how is one to attain that thorough Knowledge? Do you expect a Certificate from the Muster-Master-General of *France*, (if there be such an Officer) or what other Information do you demand? The best that can be obtained, unless from immediate Authority of the King of *France*, (and perhaps the best, even without that Exception) is what the Cabinet Council had before them. Look into the Memorial. Can you have a more exact Account, than the very Corps of which the Army consists; their Numbers in Time of Peace; their different Augmentations since the War commenced, and their present Destination? How does it appear that the Memorial is not taken from those very military Lists to which you appeal? But the Point was too strong against you to be suffered to remain in full Force, and therefore you endeavour to contradict particular Accounts, delivered by Authority, by vague Reports, which you are pleased to say were current in other Countries. How such Reports came to your Ears I cannot imagine! I believe you are the first Man of Business who ever attempted to pass such a Report on the World. But that you may make as free with my Intelligence as

I have done with yours, I will tell you a Report which I have heard, and I fancy from rather better Authority than your *Dutch* Report. That so far were the *French* from having the Troops on the Coast which you insinuate, and which I think, if all collected together, as in your different Accounts, would amount to about 100,000 Regulars, besides 100,000 Militia, there were actually but 4000 regular Troops at the Time our Fleet came upon the Coast, for the Defence of all the Garrisons and Outworks in and near *Port l'Orient*, *la Rochelle*, and *Rochefort*, and that the smaller Division of these was at *Rochefort*. I will now communicate another Report; You, as well as the Generals, seem to stand in great Awe of a Name so dignified as that of a Marshal of *France*. You speak, in different Places, of the Alertness of the Enemy on this Occasion, and the proportionable Resistance which our Troops must undoubtedly have met with, if they attempted to land. Yet what was the real Case: The old Marshal, worn out with Infirmities, *ne faisoit que pleurer*. Such were the Accounts the *French* themselves gave of him. He considered all as lost, the Moment the Attack was pointed at *Rochefort*, and far from making Dispositions to dispute the landing, he passed the Hours in Tears, and in writing Expresses to his Court.

Page 17. You pretend not fully to understand the Meaning of the Term *Coup de Main*. You attempt Definitions of it ; from its vague and uncertain Import you would insinuate that it was hardly understood by our Generals what they were to do, but you argue as if by a *Coup de Main*, was meant, only a Surprise, and that if the Opportunity of a Surprise was lost, the whole Prospect of Success was over. I shall enter into no Scholastick Dispute about the Definitions of Terms, I will only say, that it is very apparent, that the Term *Coup de Main* was not used to express the taking *Rocheport* by *Surprise only*, but that it was to be attacked in every other Way, except the opening Trenches, and erecting Batteries.

In the Advice delivered by Sir *John Ligonier*, whose Experience in the Art of War, Sir *J. Mordaunt* says, will vindicate any Officer guided by his Authority, I find this Paragraph, *Enq.* p. 22. “ As for a *Coup de Main*, it may perhaps succeed best at  
 “ your coming up, as the Enemy may be  
 “ in a great Hurry, Surprise, and Consternation, at such an unexpected Visit, and  
 “ not have Time to make his Dispositions.  
 “ But if that is not thought proper, it may  
 “ succeed as well after the Place has been thoroughly reconnoitred, and you have fixed the  
 “ Spots where you design to make the greatest  
 “ Efforts,

“ Efforts, and if the Enemy see any Prepa-  
 “ ration for a regular Attack, they will less  
 “ expect a *Coup de Main*. *Bergen-op-Zoom* was  
 “ taken by a *Coup de Main*, after a long Siege.  
 “ *St. Philip's* was taken by Scaling-Ladders,  
 “ and a *Coup de Main*, tho' the Garrison was  
 “ 3000 strong, after a Siege of 56 Days :  
 “ The Necessity of dividing a small Garrison  
 “ in a Place of such Circumference as *Roche-*  
 “ *fort* may facilitate the Success of a bold  
 “ Attempt.” If Sir *John Mordaunt* really  
 thought Sir *J. Ligonier* to be a Man of that  
 Experience in the Art of War which he de-  
 scribes him to be ; if he really meant to guide  
 himself by the whole of his Advice in the  
 Execution of the Plan, and not to excuse  
 himself, only by selecting certain Parts of it  
 from others which were explanatory, and  
 with which they were connected, how come he  
 so totally to have forgot this Part of it, which,  
 if any Doubt had subsisted, would have ex-  
 plained what was intended by a *Coup de Main*,  
 and to have remembered only the Recommen-  
 dation to secure a Communication for a Re-  
 treat? nay of what Sort was that Communi-  
 cation to be? See the same Paper, *Eng.* p. 21.  
 “ Supposing the Troops landed, it must be left  
 “ to the Consideration of the Generals whe-  
 “ ther they should not march with proper  
 “ Precautions *directly* to *Rocheafort*, to pre-  
 “ vent

“ vent any Succours being thrown into the  
 “ Place, at the same Time that the Marines  
 “ should be employed for making a good In-  
 “ trenchment for the Security of the Stores  
 “ to be landed from Time to Time, as well  
 “ as of a Retreat in Case of Necessity.” Here  
 then vanishes at once all that Part of your  
 Argument, and of the General's Defence,  
 which is founded upon the Plan of Attack,  
 being intended to take the Place only by Sur-  
 prize. Here vanishes all the Weight which  
 was to be derived from the Advice of Sir *J.*  
*Ligonier*, with regard to the Necessity of Fort  
*Fouras* being taken before the Troops were landed,  
 in order to secure a Retreat. Sir *J. Ligonier*  
 supposes the Troops first to land, and then to  
 throw up an Intrenchment, in order to secure  
 a Retreat, and to receive and preserve the  
 Stores as they were landed.

. Another Argument, which you endeavour  
 to force into your Service, is the Countenance  
 given by the Concurrence of the Sea-Officers,  
 to the Opinion of that Council of War which  
 determined to do nothing against *Rockefort*.  
 Let us see what Sir *Edward Hawke* says on  
 the Subject: In his Letter to Mr. Secretary  
*Pitt*, *Eng.* p. 101, are these Words: “ We  
 “ (meaning the Seamen) assented to the Rea-  
 “ sons for not attempting to take *Rockefort*  
 by

“ by Escalade, in Confidence of *their* (meaning the Land Officers) Judgment and Knowledge in *their own* Profession; but I and *every one else* agreed in Opinion, that the Landing could be effected.” What therefore is the Inference to be drawn from hence, but this: The Seamen were persuaded they could effect the whole of their Duty; they could land the Troops: As to what the Troops could do when landed, it was not their Province to judge: It was the Business of the Generals to determine; and they signed their Names to the Council of War, not in Testimony of their own Opinion, but in Deference to the Opinion of those whose Province it was to judge and determine. That is, they acted consistently with the King’s Instructions, to live in Harmony with the Land Officers, and not to give Occasion of Discontent, by intermeddling, protesting, and remonstrating in what was not their Province; but so weary does Sir *Edward Hawke* appear to have been of these Councils of War, that when Sir *J. Mordaunt* applied to him, to call one, to consider whether the Attack which they had agreed to make on Fort *Fouras* was of Consequence enough to delay the Return of the Fleet, Sir *Edward* refused, alledging that the Seamen had nothing to do with it; it was a Land Operation only. *Enq. p. 35.*

You

You are pleased to object to the Testimony and Opinion of Colonel *Clerk* as deserving less Weight, because it was upon his Representation that the Attempt on *Rochefort* was first thought of; and he, you think, is bound in Honour to support the Practicability, that is, the Honour of his own Plan : But you think; at the same Time, that the highest Credit is to be given to the very Names of the Officers of which the Council of War was composed; forgetting that they were the very Parties to be tried, and that their Testimony is brought forth for their own Coudemnation or Acquittal.

I have thus endeavoured to demolish that Outwork of Prejudice within which you have endeavoured to intrench yourself: So far goes the *Coup de Main*; and now, if you please, we will begin the Attack in Form.

The Report of the Board of General Officers, which was the Ground-work of your Letter, must likewise be so of mine. You have concluded, and I will begin with it; for the Plan of that Report will give a Regularity to our Arguments; and as that has considered every Part of the Conduct of the Generals, it will bring on all that can be urged for  
or



or against them from the Evidence hitherto made public in a regular Method.

The first Article of the Report is, “ It appears that one Cause of the Expedition having failed, is the not attacking Fort *Fouras* by Sea, at the same Time that it would have been attacked by Land; agreeable to the first Design, which certainly must have been of the greatest Utility towards carrying your Majesty’s Instructions into Execution; It was at first resolved by Sir *Edward Hawke* (*Thierry*, the Pilot of the *Magnanime*, having undertaken the safe Conduct of a Ship to Fort *Fouras* for that Purpose) but afterwards *laid aside upon the Representation of Vice-Admiral Knowles*, that the *Barfleur*, the Ship designed for that Service, was on Ground at the Distance of between Four or Five Miles from the Shore, but as neither Sir *Edward Hawke*, nor the Pilot could attend to give any Information upon that Head, we cannot presume to offer a certain Opinion thereupon.”

This is the First Article of the Report, which, after having told us, p. 37, that it is a most admirable Piece, calculated, as if by Compromise, neither to acquit or condemn,  
you

you tell us, p. 38. shews that at least so far the Commanders are in no Fault. If they are in no Fault are they not acquitted? I am ready to allow, that so far as this Article goes, the Commanders of the Land Forces are acquitted, but if you will argue farther, that *all* the Commanders who were to conduct the Expedition were in no Fault, especially if you insist as you do, p. 38. "that it appears plain, that *Fouras* was inaccessible to Shipping, notwithstanding the Pilot *Thierry's* Promise, which it should seem he could not make good, I totally deny your Conclusion." A Child in Argument must see the Fallacy of it. If the Fact was clear that *Fouras* was inaccessible to Shipping, how comes it to pass that the not attacking it is given as a Cause of the Failure of the Expedition. No positive Opinion was given you say upon it. Why was it not, and where was the Necessity of leaving this Point open for farther Enquiry after the Return of Sir *Edward Hawke* and the Pilot, if it already appeared to be a Measure impracticable? But *Impracticable* is the Word, and every Thing is to be, from Beginning to End, pronounced impracticable. I say that it appears to be far from certain, that *Fort Fouras* was inaccessible to Shipping, and yet the Board of Officers did right to give no Opinion, because Sir *Edward Hawke* and *Thierry*, Par-

ties principally concerned, had not been heard. I will enter farther into the Consideration of this Matter, for some Conclusion may be drawn from it; it is a Thing so astonishing, that (as you say) *a Set of Gentlemen, of untainted Character, and trusted with the Arms of their Country, could be so grossly wanting to its Honour and their own, as to return back with so bad a Grace*, that it behoves us to throw all the Light on this Transaction, which any Circumstance can produce, even though the Land Officers are not concerned in the Event. But whoever is to blame, the Nation is concerned in the Event; for that bears, the Loss and the Infamy of the Miscarriage.

It appears from the Evidence of Vice Ad. Knowles, *Enq.* p. 44. that the whole Affair of this Attack upon *Fouras* was delegated by Sir *Edward Hawke* to his Inspection, and that Sir *Edward* had proceeded so far in the Execution of the Plan, as to direct his Secretary to begin an Order to lighten the *Barfleur* for that Purpose. But this was laid aside, upon the Remonstrances of Capt. *Graves* and Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, that the *Barfleur* was aground at between Four and Five Miles Distance from the Shore; that then Sir *Edward Hawke* ordered him to try to carry the Bomb-ketches in, which he did, and run them

them a-ground at more than two Miles and Two Thirds of a Mile Distance from Fort *Fouras*, where they were likely to have been taken by Row-Boats: That then he run the *Coventry* Frigate a-ground five Times within the Hour, at a greater Distance from the Shore than the Bomb-Ketch. That *then* (and it seems not till *then*) *he sent his Master to sound*, and found that at *Two Miles* Distance from the Fort, there was but six Foot Water at High Water\*. All these notable Exploits were performed by Vice-Admiral *Knowles*; the same, who, it is said, advised Sir *Edward Hawke* not even to enter the Road of *Basque*, lest he should be bombarded; the same, one has formerly heard and read of in Courts-Martial; the same, who on a late P——y Enquiry, had the Happiness to boast such peculiar Protection and Countenance from you, Sir; the same, who (as I have heard) detained the Squadron Two Days in Sight of the *French* Coast, because he had sent away the Pilot, destined to conduct it upon a Chace after a *French* Ship. But I will not recapitulate his Virtues or his Merit. It was upon the Remonstrance of *this* Vice-Admiral, whose Station in Command entitled him, at least, to so much Confidence from his superior

\* *Quæ.* How high do the Tides rise in the Bay of Biscay, when the Water at the Mouth of the River *Charent* is but six Feet at High Water?

superior Officer, that the Resolution to attack Fort *Fouras* by Sea was laid aside. Now, then, let me relate to you the Reasons which induce me to believe, that notwithstanding this Report of Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, Fort *Fouras* was accessible by Sea, tho' the Vice-Admiral had not *the good Fortune* to find out the Channel.

In the first Place, then, tho' I have by no Means that high Opinion of the *French* Wisdom and Ability which you entertain, and on every Occasion extol so highly; yet I do suppose, that in Matters of Defence, they do conduct themselves on Principles similar to those which are adopted by the rest of Mankind. I do suppose, for Instance, that when they build a Fort, it is intended either to defend or offend. *Fouras* was weak to the Land; it stood at the Water's Edge to guard the Channel; it stood even on a Bank which ran into the Water; and as Col. *Wolfe*, who seems to be the first Officer who thought of reconnoitering it, tells us, *Eng.* p. 30, It had 24 Embrasures to the Water-Side. What was the Use of this Fort? Was it to guard a Bank of Sand over which scarce a *Thames* Wherry could pass? If the Guns of no Ship whatever could reach the Fort, could the Guns of the Fort reach any Ship? According to Mr. *Knowles*, there was no Channel

nel at all, or it lay out of Gunshot of the Fort. At two Miles Distance the Vice-Admiral's Master found but six Feet Water at High-Water; at near three Miles Distance the Bomb-Ketch, which drew but eleven Foot Water, went aground. The *Coventry* Frigate did the same further out than that, and the *Barfleur* at a still greater Distance. Now, tho' *after* all this Delay, and Hazard to the Ships, that Admiral thought fit to sound, and try the Depth of the Water *at a Distance from the Fort, where no Cannon could reach*; yet it is astonishing to find not a single Proof attempted to be given of the Depth of the Water near the Shore, and within Gun-shot of the Fort. Is it impossible then that the Channel, a narrow one, might run in Shore? Is it not demonstrable that it did so, both from the Circumstance of the Thing, and the Evidence of those who knew, and had navigated it? What says *Bonneau*, the Fisherman, examined by General *Conway*, and others, *Enq.* p. 53, There were four Fathom (24 Foot) Water at half Cannon-shot from Fort *Fouras*, a Depth sufficient for a 60 Gun Ship. Now, tho' the Land Officers did not chuse to trust to the Intelligence of a Fisherman for the State of the Fortifications at *Rochefort*, yet it seems to be the best Evidence

dence as to the Depth of the Channel that could have been wished. There was the united Testimony of *Thierry* and *Bonneau*, joined to the Reason of the Thing, that there must be a Channel within Gun-shot of the Fort, though the Ships missed the Entrance of it. I might add, that tho' the Vice-Admiral could not conduct a Ship to the Fort, there were Captains in the Fleet who it seems offered it: Capt. *Colby* offered to carry the Princess *Amelia*. Enq. p. 30. How then can we unriddle this Mystery, for a Mystery there certainly is? Perhaps it is easier to guess the Solution than to explain it.

From all these Circumstances, I say it is clear that *Fouras* must be, and was accessible by Sea; That the Board of Officers are therefore justified in the Report, that the not attacking it by Sea appeared to be one of the Causes of the Failure of the Expedition. I have said this merely to justify the Report of the Board; for the Conduct of the Generals seems to me so little affected by this Article, and indeed, so totally independant of it, that from this Moment, if you chuse it, I will suppose that *Fouras* was built only to guard a Sand-Bank,

Bank, and that it was inaccessible to every Thing but a Long-Boat.

The next Article in the Report is, “ That  
 “ another Cause of the Failure of the Expe-  
 “ dition was, that instead of attempting to  
 “ land when the Report was received on the  
 “ 24th of *September* from Rear-Admiral *Bro-*  
 “ *derick*, and the Captains who had been sent  
 “ out to sound and reconnoitre, a Council  
 “ of War was summoned, and held on the  
 “ 25th, in which it was unanimously re-  
 “ solved not to land, as the Attempt upon  
 “ *Rockfort* was neither adviseable or practica-  
 “ able. But it does not appear to us that  
 “ there were then, or at any Time afterwards,  
 “ either a Body of Troops, or Batteries on  
 “ Shore, sufficient to have prevented the at-  
 “ tempting a Descent, in Pursuance of the  
 “ Instructions signed by Your Majesty.  
 “ Neither does it appear to us, that there were  
 “ any sufficient Reasons to induce the Council  
 “ of War to believe, that *Rockfort* was so far  
 “ changed in respect to its Strength, or Pos-  
 “ ture of Defence since the Expedition was  
 “ resolved on in *England*, as to prevent all  
 “ Attempts of an Attack upon the Place,  
 “ in order to burn and destroy the Docks,  
 “ Magazines, Arsenals, and Shipping, in  
 “ Obedience to Your Majesty’s Command.”

Is



Is this, Sir, the Part of the Report, which you say is so far from carrying Censure, that the Commanders (I mean the Land Commanders) might even glory in avowing and subscribing to it? Is this the Part *which you say does Honour to their Sense and Obedience*? Let us state it in fewer Words: A Cause of Failure in this Expedition was, that the Generals, instead of landing on the 24th of *September*, when the Report of those sent to reconnoitre was made, called a Council of War on the 25th, and resolved not to land. Yet there was no Reason which prevented their having landed as they were ordered. Nor do we think the Council of War had any Reason to imagine, that the Situation of *Rockefort* appeared now so different from what it was represented to be when the Expedition was first set on Foot, as to make it impossible to execute their Orders.

If this is Obedience, if this is Matter of Glory to a Soldier, in the Name of Common Sense, what is Disobedience; and what can he do to deserve Shame and Dishonour? Can it be asserted in stronger Terms that the Expedition failed, because the Council of War, *without any Reason to justify such Resolution*, determined it to be impracticable and unadvisable to execute their Orders. If you  
say

say that the Determination does not declare in positive and exprefs Terms, that the Expedition was originally prudent and adviseable, you say true : Such a Declaration would have been very unbecoming the Board of Officers to whose Consideration that Question was by no Means referred. They were to consider whether the Officers had sufficient Foundation to justify the Non-execution of their Orders, and they make the proper Answer to such a Question, that from what appears to them, those Officers had not such a sufficient Foundation as could justify them. I dare say they took Care to avoid giving their Opinions on more than was referred to them ; in so doing they shewed their Capacity and their Knowledge of their Duty. And yet, notwithstanding their Care to avoid it, an Approbation of the original Plan is most manifestly and necessarily *implied*, in this Decision ; for if *Rochefort* was open to attack, no one doubts but it was wise to attempt it, yet with all the Changes which the Generals could prove to have been made in its Strength and Posture of Defence, since the Expedition was first resolved on, it did not appear to be even *now* in such a State as to prevent all Attempts of an Attack. Yet no such Attempts were made.

But you seem to be so intent on condemn-  
 E ing

ing the original Plan, that, like the Council of War, you forget the Point which ought to be under Consideration : Suppose the Plan to be as wild as you represent it? Are the Officers justifiable in their Disobedience of Orders? By no means. The first Duty of a Soldier is Obedience: Obedience not only to the Command of a superior Officer, but to the State which employs him: His Life is not his own, it belongs to the State. Such are the very Terms of his Service; such the Conditions on which he is maintained by the Publick. If he is ordered to an Attack, he is not to ask whether he can get back, and yet he is to take the best Precautions to enable him to get back. It is as much a Part of his Duty to preserve, as to expose himself; *provided he performs his Orders*. But is a private Officer, or a Collection of Officers in Council (for the Number does not alter their Condition) to say, My Orders are ridiculous, and I will not execute them? Who constituted them Counsellors of State, and submitted the Propriety of their Orders to their Decision?

This is and must be the Case where Orders are express and positive. Where indeed discretionary Orders are given, there arises a Latitude and Power of judging. Such was undoubtedly the present Case. The Generals had

had discretionary Orders, but what was the Point to be the Subject of their Discretion? Was it whether their original Orders were fit to be executed, supposing the Case to be as represented when the Orders were given? Undoubtedly not. It had been before determined by the King, that is by the State, that on the apparent Condition of *Rochefort* it ought to be attacked. They were therefore to use their utmost Efforts to land and attack it. But it was left to their Discretion to desist, if they found *by undoubted Proof*, that the Case, *as it existed*, was become materially changed from what had been *represented*. That alone was the Object of their Discretion, and therefore the Board of Officers concluded like Men, knowing the Duty of Soldiers, that those who constituted the Council of War had failed in theirs, for they desisted from the Enterprize without such a material Change of Circumstances appearing. I do not indeed wonder, that on this Occasion you should have been led into an Error. You are so much connected with Soldiers accustomed to assume the Offices of Statesmen, that you have been naturally led to confound their Duty.

Let us examine then on what Foundation the Board of Enquiry have grounded this fe-

were Censure. If *Fouras* could have been attacked by Sea, undoubtedly one or more of the Sea Commanders failed in their Duty. But does it follow, that because the Sea Officers were guilty of a Failure, the Land Officers were justified in their immediate Resolution to go Home again? Undoubtedly not. Was *Fouras* so absolutely necessary, that without an Attack upon it from the Sea, it was impossible to land, and did it, *upon full Enquiry*, appear impracticable to take it by Land without the Assistance of Sea Operations? Neither of these Justifications can the Council of War boast. The Admirals and Captains report Two fit landing Places independant of *Fouras*. *Enq.* p. 15. And as to the taking that Fort by Land without a Sea Operation, it does not appear so much as to have entered into the Heads of any of the Council, even to order it to be reconnoitred with a View of taking it, and making it a Place of Retreat, tho' all the Generals concur that the principal Objection to the Attack at *Rockefort* was the Want of a Place of Retreat; and Sir *John Mordaunt* declares, *Enq.* p. 28. That had Fort *Fouras* been taken, *there would have been great Ease in the Rest of the Enterprize*; surely then it was the highest Imputation on the Council of War, never to have considered this Point, *till after they had determined to lay*  
aside

aside the only Measure which made the Fort worth attacking.

But, to go Step by Step, let us consider the Difficulties which prevented the Attempt to land. Sir *Edward Hawke*, in his Letter to Mr. *Pitt*, *Enq.* p. 101, says, *He, and every one else, were of Opinion, the Landing might be effected.* The Admiral, and reconnoitering Captains, report, *Enq.* p. 102. Two convenient Landing-Places, where the Transports might come within a Mile and a Half of the Shore, and where no Batteries on the Shore could annoy the Landing.\* Admiral *Broderick* says, *Enq.* p. 45, that the Landing was so good “that he could have got out of the Boats without wetting his Shoes.” That no Shot from any Battery could reach the Boats. That Men of War could come within two Miles. That the Sand-Hills were forty Yards distant from High-Water-Mark. That the Bomb-Ketches, if they could come near enough, might have been useful to annoy any Troops hid behind the Sand-Hills, and p. 44. Admiral *Knowles* says, a Bomb, at an Elevation of 45 Degrees, will go 2 Miles and two Thirds.”

This Account of the Landing-places in *Chatelaillon Bay*, is not controverted by the General

\* I have heard that an Order was actually signed by Sir *E. Hawke*, to run the Transports on Ground close under the Shore at High-Water, in case the Generals would have landed.

General in Chief, or any of the rest of the Council of War. But the Objections they raise are of two Sorts. "Numbers of Troops hid behind the Sand-hills, which might cut off the Parties as fast as they landed: A Difficulty of getting back again to the Ships even when landed, as it was clear from the Evidence of discreet and experienced Pilots, that if the Wind blew westerly from the Bay, as there was great Reason to expect it would at that Season, Boats could not come or go to the Ships even for many Weeks together." As to the Troops hid behind the Sand-hills, let us see what Evidence there was of any Numbers collected for such a Purpose.

In the first Place I must beg Leave to insist, that it became the Generals to give Credit to the Intelligence which they received from the Government, and upon which the Plan of the Expedition was undertaken, till they had sufficient Authority *either from what they saw, or from credible and positive Information* to doubt or disbelieve the Truth of it. Such Facts and Intelligence as they could obtain, they were to believe in Proportion to the Credibility of it, but they were not in Contradiction to the positive Intelligence communicated to them by the Government to act upon *their own Reasoning*, as General Conway tells you he did, *Enq. p. 36,*  
that

that tho' *he knew of no considerable Army* in the Field, yet he was *persuaded there must be a considerable Number of Men in Rochfort.* The positive Intelligence communicated by the Government informed them, that there were in Fact but 10,000 regular Troops to guard a most immense Tract of Coast, furnished with Forts and Fortifications, in each of which there must have been some proportion of regular Troops. A great Number of these were doubtless at *Brest.* Sir J. *Mordaunt* in his Defence, *Enq.* p. 13, 14. says he had Intelligence of above 7000 there. And his Reasoning goes no farther than to say, *Enq.* p. 17, That what seemed *Certain* on the whole was, that tho' it was *Possible* there might be no Army assembled to engage them in the Field, it was highly *Improbable* there was not *a good Garrison in Rochfort.* Allow for the present that there was; would the Governor of it have deserted his Works and marched into the open Field with a Complement of Troops amounting only to *a good Garrison.* Troops were to be left within the Walls; there must be more in Fort *la Pointe*, more in Fort *Fouras*, and so extensive were the Works at *Rochfort* and *Rochele*, and the Forts dependent on them, all of which were liable to be attacked, that if the whole 10,000 Men, which guarded such a length of Coast, had



had been assembled in those two Places, it would have been impossible to have spared such a Number as could have marched to the Coast to give a serious Opposition to the Landing. As to the positive Intelligence of Troops assembled; let us see what it amounts to. Admiral *Bröderick* saw an Army *in the Field*; *Enq.* p. 45, amounting to 400 or 500 Foot and 150 Horse. General *Conway* says, *Enq.* p. 36, that one Prisoner had said there were eleven Battalions, and another seven, but not in the Field but at *Rockelle*; and tho' he paid little Regard to them singly, yet on the whole, he thought there was no room to doubt but there were *some Troops*; *Enq.* p. 31. Captain *Skinner*, of the *Viper* Sloop, told Colonel *Howard* that on *Sunday* or *Monday* he saw a considerable Number of Troops, and that he reckoned eight or nine Pair of Colours\*. But whether they were regular Troops, or Troops of the Country, he could not tell. - *Enq.* p. 32. And I think Sir *J. Mordaunt* says, that the Prisoners declared there were Troops, *and even named Regiments.* *Enq.* p. 17.

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\* There are three Standards to each Battalion, and a *French* Battalion is generally computed at 500 Men.

What is there in this Sum Total of Evidence on this Point, to vary the Intelligence given to the Generals before they sailed. They were told there were *some* Troops, Regiments, and even Battalions; but what credible Evidence was there to induce them to suppose they were too numerous for the Troops on board the Fleet to cope with?

But how could our Troops have been landed? In the first Place Amiral Knowles, in Concurrence with the Admiral and Captains who went to reconnoitre, “ had assured  
 “ *them there were two Landing-Places out of*  
 “ *the Reach of any Battery*; That the Beach  
 “ was dry, sandy, and firm, and the Soldier  
 “ need not have wetted his Shoes in getting  
 “ out of the Boat; that the Men of War,  
 “ [which drew from 20 to 30 Foot Water]  
 “ might have come within two Miles; and  
 “ tho’ the Cannon from them could not annoy the Troops, if there were any behind  
 “ the Sand-Hills, yet the Bomb-Ketches  
 “ might, which throw a Bomb two Miles and  
 “ two Thirds; and which, as they drew but  
 “ eleven Feet Water, might have come (probably) as near as the Transports.” So that the Men might have landed under Cover of the Bombs, which, as the Sand-Hills were but Forty Yards from the Water Edge, must have

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have cleared the Ground for considerably more than a Mile beyond the Sand-Hills.

As to the Number of Troops that could have landed at a Time, it seems astonishing that this should never have been considered by the Generals, I may say, till they wanted an Excuse to come home again. For Col. *Wolfe* deposes, *Eng.* p. 21. That he believes there never was an exact Calculation made how many could have embarked at a Time in the Boats: What a noble Foresight in the Generals! He thinks, however, that thirty-six Companies of 60 Men, with their Officers, might have embarked at a Time; in all above Two Thousand and Two Hundred. And how long would it have been before these could have been supported by such another Body? Would it have been two Hours? that, certainly, is the very utmost. But perhaps not Half an Hour. Hitherto, indeed, the Generals, and their Advocates, have been pleased to calculate the intermediate necessary Time between landing the Detachments, from what would have happened on the turbulent and tempestuous Night of the 28th, when the Transports lay at a great Distance from the Shore, and when the Sea run so peculiarly high, that the ablest Seamen differ'd whether they could reach the Land or not: Even then it would have

have been done in five or six Hours, or not at all. It is most evident, therefore, that in the Course of a Night, between dark and light, the whole Body of Troops on board the Fleet might have been assembled on a dry, sandy, firm Beech, under the Protection of Bomb-Ketches, which would have cleared the Ground for a Mile beyond them : Why then was not this done in the Nights either of the 24th, 25th, 26th, or 27th, during which Time there is no Appearance that the Surf of the Sea would have given any Obstruction.

I may be mistaken in Terms; I am neither Soldier nor Sailor ; I pretend only to such Knowledge as flows from common Sense and common Reason.

As to the great Difficulties arising from the Possibility of a Wind setting in from the Bay, which for six Weeks together might prevent a Communication with the Ships, I must be excused if I lay little Stress upon it; because, tho' this is set forth with all due Magnificence, when it is to justify the Generals in the Non-Obedience of their Orders, and when they did not chuse to land; yet neither this, nor the Terror of Armies behind the Sand-Hills, had the least Influence, when they found themselves disposed to leave the Coast with the Glory of having taken Fort Fouras, tho' the Difficulties were then greater thro' the tempestuous

tempestuous Weather. You do well to say, that in this the Generals did too much, and it was an *Imprudence*. They did indeed. They did infinitely too little for their Country, but they did infinitely too much for their own Justification. When their Duty, the Execution of their Orders, the Honour and Interest of their Country, call upon them to act, Difficulties are raised as high as Mountains, but they sink instantly to Mole-Hills; or, what is as ridiculous, to Sand-Hills, the Moment it becomes a Consideration, whether it would not be safer for the Generals to do something which might allay the national Clamour against them.

Let us now consider how far they are justified, by what they found, in determining, in Contradiction to what they were ordered, that an Attack upon *Rochefort* was not to be attempted. In the first Place, I shall take Leave to strip them of that Part of their Defence, which arises totally from their own Misconduct, the Want of having a Place of Retreat. When we are to judge from Events of the Practicability of a Measure, we are to argue from the Case, as it would have stood, if all had been done which could have been done. *Tomas* might have been had for a Place  
of

of Retreat; and it is but an unfortunate Slip in the General, who owns, *Enq.* p. 28. That had Fort *Fouras* been taken, *there would have been great Ease in the rest of the Enterprise*; I shall take the Liberty, therefore, to consider the Army as landed, and the Stores, &c. secured within the Walls of that Fort.

I shall likewise take Leave to strip them of that Part of their Defence, which arises from (I think, a Sort of Prevarication, but certainly) a Misrepresentation of the Words of their Instructions. They are eternally telling us of the great Change between the State of Affairs in which they were to act, and the State in which they were sent out, arising from Delays of various Kinds, by which an Alarm was spread, and the Possibility of a *Surprise* was prevented, and they were to act only by Way of Surprise. Who told them so? Their Instructions, I am sure, held no such Language. *To attack, and by a vigorous Impression, Force*, *Enq.* p. 78. These were the Instructions. If I order a Man to force into a Place, does it imply, that if he can't steal into it, he need not attempt it? He may try that Method first, if he pleases. It is safer for himself; but if he can't do that, is he to decline every other Attempt? Where, then is the Force which he is to use?

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If the Instructions, therefore, convey no such Ideas as confine the Operations of the Troops to a Surprise only, is there any Thing in the Hints of Advice given by Sir *John Ligonier*, whose Opinion, founded on such consummate Experience, the General in Chief thought would be a Justification to any Officer. Read the Paper as it stands together, *Enq.* p. 20th, 21st, 22d. He says, indeed, that it would perhaps be *best*, if the Enemy *could be* surprised ; but *a bold Attack, after having secured a Place of Retreat, secured Guides on the Spot, and thoroughly reconnoitred, and fixed upon the fittest Places*, is what is recommended and enlarged upon. But the Generals, it seems, did not secure the Place of Retreat because they would not attack ; and they did not attack, because they had not secured a Place of Retreat. As to the other Measures advised, the getting Guides on the Spot, reconnoitring, and trying to find out fit Places to attack, all these they omitted, for they never were on the Spot. Of all the Hints, therefore, given by that consummate General, Sir *John Ligonier*, not one was carried into Execution,

As to the State of the *French* Troops which were at *Rockefort*, I have already considered that Point, and therefore need add little

little to it now. The utmost which the Generals pretend to have imagined, amounts to no more than this : Sir *John Mordaunt* supposes, p. 27, that there must have been *a good Garrison*, besides, Workmen in the Docks, and the Crews of the Ships in the River. General *Conway*, p. 39, *from general Reasoning*, and from Intelligence, *was persuaded* there must be a considerable Number of Men in *Rochefort* : And General *Cornwallis* does not so much as mention any Difficulty to be feared from the Enemies Troops, but puts the whole on that of Landing, and the having no Retreat or Communication with the Ships secured. Thus, then, the Terrors, which you in your Performance endeavoured to magnify, of the great Opposition to be expected from the Enemies Troops not only vanish, but it appears, that the Generals themselves never adopted those Terrors, for they had no credible Intelligence contradicting the Accounts received at home : and one supposes only *a good Garrison*, and the other *a considerable Number* of Men in *Rochefort*.

Being Masters then of *Fouras*, and no Body of Troops in the Field to oppose them, they could at least have marched to reconnoitre, and inspect, *with their own Eyes*, the Nature of the Fortifications about *Rochefort*.



*fort.* And this they might have done without Danger to their Troops, and without the Loss of a single Soldier. Had they found, by their own Observation, and by incontrovertible Testimony, that the Fortifications of the Place so far and so totally varied, from the Accounts given of them, as to make the Success, by Assault, impossible, or, in a very high Degree, improbable; then, and not till then, would they have been justified in returning to their Ships; for then they would have performed their Orders; *They would have attempted as far as was found practicable.* But Posterity will hardly believe that three *English* Generals, of noble Blood, high in their Master's Favour, and high in Reputation, who were sent with a powerful Armada, and a Body of near 10,000 *British* Troops under their Command, upon an Enterprize of the greatest Importance to their Country, and upon which the Eyes, not only of their Countrymen, but all *Europe*, were turned with eager Expectation, could consent to come back again, even without an Attempt to reconnoitre, leaving behind them, if not their own Honour, yet certainly the Honour of their Country; because, in a Council of War held aboard their Ships, their appeared a Contrariety of Evidence, whether the Ditch about the Town of *Rockefort*, which was supposed at their first setting

setting out to be dry, was, in Reality, a dry or a wet Ditch: Yet, Party and Prejudice apart, is not this a true State of the Case? Supposing the Troops in Possession of *Fouras* which they might so easily have been, what other Difficulty do the Generals pretend to suggest, besides the wet Ditch.

I have scarce Patience enough to argue with them upon the Probability of this Point, one way or the other; yet, as I have undertaken an irksome Task, I will go through with it. Sir *John Mordaunt*, in his Narrative delivered into the Board, is very short, and not very particular in the Account of what he had heard was the State of the Fortifications. The first Part relates to the *open* Part of the *Town*, where there was Rampart for sixty Yards in Length; this Sir *John* supposes must have been fortified with an Intrenchment, as by *Thierry's* Account, there was a Palisade, and a Trench might be thrown up in 24 Hour's Time, to which the Ships in the River would be better Flankers than a Bastion. But did Sir *John* go to *Rochefort*, in order to hear this Evidence from *Thierry*, and to examine his Plans? Surely he might have done that at home. Yet he does not suggest one Syllable of new Intelligence gained on this Head since his Arrival on the Coast; but speaks only of his own

*Suppositions*, in which, however, he was mistaken. The rest of the Circumference of the Town was *generally* proved, he says, (but it does not appear by whom) to be strong and high; but I should have been glad to have seen the Depositions of those Witnesses who proved this; because, when they spoke of the *general* Parts being strong and high, it is natural to suppose they were asked some few Questions as to those *particular* Parts which were not strong and high; yet I am not sure they were asked such Questions; and therefore I cannot but again lament the total Suppression of the Evidence given to the Council of War,

As to the State of the Ditch, two Witnesses declared they had seen it full of Water, by Means of Sluices in the Town. When Sir John is interrogated on these Points, by the Board, he says, that there was a Contradiction in the Evidence given to the Council of War; and that some of the Prisoners contradicted, and some confirmed Col. Clarke's Account.

As to the first Part of the Fortification, (I mean the open Parts near the River) it appears, from thence, how much the Generals were out in their Reasoning; that the long Alarm upon the Coast; the particular Expectation

pectation of a Visit in those Parts; the Presence of a Marefchall of *France*, and the great Alertnefs, Wifdom, and Sagacity of the People, had put every Thing into fuch a Pofture of Defence as might defy an Attack. It appears how much better that Officer reafoned, who faid, *We fhould never take it for granted that all is done which ought to be done, even in France.* *Bonneau*, the Fifherman, recommended to Col. *Clerke*, as a knowing, Teftible Fellow, by Capt. *Hamilton*, General *Conway's* Aid de Camp, affured him, in the Prefence of Col. *Walfe*, and feveral other Perfons, that upon the 21ft of that very Month, when our Fleet was on the Coaft, that every Spot remained as open, and as unfortified, as it was when Col. *Clerke* firft faw it in the Year 1754. *Eng.* p. 52. But this, tho' reported to the General, he would not believe; he would not believe a Fifherman in the Affair of a Fortification, becaufe he was not an Engineer; and yet he would not believe the Engineer of the Fort of *Aix*, who faid the Duch was dry, and the Town open, becaufe he was an Engineer.

It feems to me to be one of the moft unhappy Omens for this Country, that the *French* have gained fuch an Afceendency over the Minds of our military People, as to be confidered by them in the Light of fuperior

Beings, to which our lesser Geniuses dare not presume to look up. " After the several Intelligences we had received, says the General, *Eng.* p. 14. that the *French* expected an Invasion on this Part of the Coast, and were not alarmed, *it was impossible to imagine* that a Place like *Rochefort*, the second certainly in Importance on the whole Coast, should, after such Warnings, be totally neglected." And yet it was so totally neglected, that an Intrenchment, which might have been thrown up with Ease, and planted with Batteries, to defend an open Entrance into the Town, sixty Yards wide, was not thrown up, even after our Ships had been on that very Coast. But how astonished will our Generals be when they are told that this is not the first Time that there has been this Neglect at *Rochefort*. There has been no Alteration in the Fortifications of that Place these Seventy Years.

The *French* considered it as an open Town, so said the Engineer of *Aix* to Colonel *Clerks*. And yet the Expedition against *Port l'Orient*, might have alarmed the *French* for *Rochefort* so far, at least, as to throw an Intrenchment round it, if that would have been sufficient to secure it against an Assault. It may be, and indeed it was astonishing to think

think, that a Place so important as *Rochefort* should have been no better secured. But for what a Length of Time did the principal Dock-yards of *England* lay exposed not only to be destroyed by a great Force, but to be burnt by the Crews of two, or three Privateers. But there are Blunders and Oversights in all Governments, for which a prudent and active Adversary lies in Wait to take his Advantage. For the future the *French* will take Care of *Rochefort*: Our Oversights we are unhappily taught to correct, by severe Losses, while the *French* are taught to correct their Blunders by our superior Blunders.

As to the Ditch, if the concurrent Evidence of Colonel *Clarke*, and the *French* Engineer, that it was a dry one, had been out of the Question, the contradictory Evidence given before the Council of War, might have been cleared up from the very Situation of the Place: It was a Maxim of one of the greatest *French* Generals, and a *French* Maxim will have Weight with our *English* Generals, that one should never suppose a Ditch to be full of Water till some-body, we can depend upon, has dipped in his Finger and tasted it; yet that *French* General would scarce have taken the Trouble of sending to search if there was Water in a Ditch which lay on the Side of a Hill.

**FRAN.** It is impossible without Sluices, which must be repeated as often as the Level of the Ground varies. *Cela ne pourroit être a cause de l'inégalité du terrain,* was what might have occurred to an *English* General, as well as to a *French* Engineer. Even if there had been Sluices, to demolish them was not the Work of a *Battering Train*. A Couple of Field Pieces would blow up a Sluice in Half an Hour, and then where would be the wet Ditch.

I have heard too another Thing, and I am well founded in asserting it. There was a certain Monsieur Bonneville, a Volontier, who went under the Protection of one of our Generals in this Expedition. He had been about Eight or Nine Years since thro' Rochefort, and great Stress was laid in the Council of War on the Evidence that he gave, that to the best of his Recollection, there was then Water in the Ditch; This Evidence, tho' from such long Memory, was eagerly caught at; but a very deaf Ear was turned to the Undertaking, with which he accompanied his Evidence, that even tho' there should be Water, he would, by a Method which he explained, make that Ditch practicable in Two or Three different Places in the Space of a few Minutes, and wide enough for a Battalion to march in Front. That the Materials

*gials for this were in their Power, and that the Thing was no chimerical Project, since it had been done by Marshal Lowendahl the last War in Two several Instances, where he himself was present and in Service. But this, it seems, was too dangerous.*

Whoever is acquainted with the Characters of the Generals, concerned in this Expedition, will acquit them of the Imputation of personal Cowardice : Far be it from me to impute it ; I declare I would not attempt to insinuate it ; they have never indeed commanded before, but they have served, and served with Spirit and Gallantry ; their Conduct therefore, on this Occasion, is more mysterious and astonishing. Of the whole which was their peculiar Department, have they, or did they attempt to execute a single Part ? The Fort of *Aix* was taken, not by the Troops, but by Capt. *Howe* ; if the Fleet would have taken *Fouras* likewise they were at full Liberty to do it, and if they could have sailed up to *Rochefort*, and have taken that too, it does not appear that the Generals would have opposed it. But neither does it appear that they would have risked their Soldiers even from *Fouras*, for if they once got out of the Ships, who can tell where they could get back again. Is it not astonishing that when Vice-Admiral *Knowles* had reported



reported the Impracticability of taking it by Sea, the Generals should first lay aside all Thoughts of prosecuting the whole Plan, before they ever asked whether this *necessary* Place could be taken *without* the Assistance of Ships. When they came to reconnoitre they found how practicable it was, so practicable, so little hazardous, that they resolved to attack it merely *for the Sake of employing the Soldiers*, *Enq.* p. 109. without intending to draw any other Effect from it,

It is no Fault in a General to be cautious how he exposes his Troops; it is his Duty not to expose them wantonly and rashly: But Troops must serve when the Occasions of the State demand it, and sometimes they must go upon hard Service: The Question was not whether *Rochefort* could be taken without Loss; but whether *Rochefort* could be taken. A Ditch, even a wet one, a Wall, an Intrenchment, or a Battery of Cannon, do not make the Places they defend impregnable. They are taken every Day, and taken by Escalade and Assault. Mareschal *Lowendahl* took, by Assault, several Fortifications, surrounded by wet Ditches, last War; yet not by Surprise. Fort St. *Philip* was taken by Assault, without a Breach, tho' defended by a stronger Garrison than was within the Ram-  
parts

parts of *Rochefort*: If it had not been so taken, it never could have been taken; and yet that Attack was much more desperate, than there was any Appearance to suspect that on *Rochefort* would have been. Are not Entrenchments, even the strongest, and best defended, continually forced? and did not the *French*, in the only Stop they received in the Dominions of *Hanover*, march up a steep Hill, into the Mouths of a Battery of Cannon, and take it? All these Services must be performed, and they can be performed but still, (I agree) with Loss, It would be happy if we could carry on War without shedding Christian Blood; but Mankind is not yet sufficiently civilized to adopt such Methods. “ In all doubtful, dangerous military Attempts, the Advantages, that may accrue from Success, ought to be weighed against the Damage and Misfortunes which may be the Consequences of a Repulse.” So says Sir *John Ligonier*, *Enq.* p. 21. in his Advice to Sir *John Mordaunt*. Our forcing, by a vigorous Impression, *Rochefort*, and seizing the Ships and Naval Stores, burning the Docks, destroying the Foundry and Cannon, and thereby crippling the *French* Navy, perhaps for the rest of this War, were such Advantages as this Country, in its present Circumstances, might, in Prudence, purchase,

chase, even with the Lives of some of its Soldiers, and might thereby have saved the Lives of many of its Subjects.

In p. 41. of your own Work, you are pleased to represent the Resolution to land, on the 28th, for the Attack of Fort *Fouras*, as an *Excess of Zeal to carry on the Enterprize, and a Perseverance in a Plan which was found impracticable*: But you have forgot that the Generals themselves claim no such Merit, nor do they even pretend that this was attempted with a View still to proceed against *Rochefort*; Quite the contrary. The General himself, *Eng.* p. 109, represents it as something to employ the Troops before they went Home, while the Fortifications of *Aix* was blowing up, but being prevented from landing that Night, and the Fleet being ready the next Morning, they did not think it worth while to stay another Day. They were so determined by the contradictory Evidence given at the Council of War, and so fixed in their Resolution, in no Situation to attack *Rochefort*, that it was not worth while to detain the Fleet *a Day*, in order to take a Place, which if the Seamen had taken at first, the General says the rest of *the Enterprize would have been easy*, and from whence they might, with Safety, have informed their own Eyes of the exact Situation of the Town.

You

You are pleased to express an high Contempt of the *Idea* of giving any Blow to *France*, not only in any Part of the Land Frontiers, but of that immense Tract of Land which spreads for so great an Extent through different Seas, and you shelter yourself under one Axiom of *Schomberg*, “ That attacking *France* in *France*, was taking a “ Bull by the Horns.” And another of the Great *Victor Amadeus* of *Savoy*, “ That he “ knew a Thousand Ways into *France*, but “ none out of it.”

This is another Instance of what I have before lamented, as an unhappy Omen to this Country, that even great Statesmen can adopt the Maxim, that the Wisdom and Power of *France* renders her invulnerable. Yet I did not expect that you, of all Men living, would have endeavoured to expose the Absurdity of taking the Bull by the Horns ; you who have been, who continue to be the grand Advocate for Land Operations, and for sending the Force of this Island upon the Continent. I will agree, indeed, that neither in the last War, nor perhaps in the present, was there much Probability that our Troops should enter *France*. So much the worse for us.

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But do you make no Difference between attacking such a Barrier as *France* has towards *Flanders*, or even attacking it from the Side of *Italy*, and the sending a superior Fleet to storm at once a Place situated on the Coast which the Generals were not instructed to *bold and maintain*, but to destroy, and then go on board their Ships? The Way back, if the Fleet continued superior, was just as easy as the Way thither.

But tho' I differ from you in that Opinion, we agree exactly in another, which you advance; I mean the great Importance of *Cape Breton*, and the Blow which *France* would receive in the Loss of it; yet if, as you observe justly, it would not *now be a Folly to be surpris'd at any Thing*, I should have been a little surpris'd to hear the Neglect of that Object charged as an Imputation on the Minister, whom you and *yours* have so often ridiculed, as *America-mad*. Must I really ask the Question? Was that great Object forgot? Has the War in *America* in general, or a Plan of Attack on that Place in particular, been neglected by him; or was it his Scramble for Power? Was it his Junto, or his Party Cabal that suspended or weakened the Operation? Look back a few Months. When was the Attack of that Place projected? And when

when was the Armament fitted out and prepared for the Execution? Was it not in that very Hour when you and yours were with so much Decency and Humanity ridiculing a Bed-ridden Minister, and representing him to be as impotent in his mental Faculties as he was in his bodily State? Was not that Armament prepared by the then Board of Admiralty, with an Expedition that shewed they were no Strangers to Business, how much soever they might be ridiculed as Novices in Office? Was it not ready to sail Six Weeks sooner than any Armament could be sent from the Ports of *France*, notwithstanding the utmost Exertions of that wise and alert People? Was it not sufficient for the Service, and infinitely superior to any Thing which at that Time could oppose it in *America*? When by a Series of adverse Winds the Departure of that Armament had been delayed so many Weeks, and till the *French* Fleets were ready to put to Sea, was there not a Reinforcement of Six Capital Ships *ordered* by that Admiralty, to be added to those originally destined to that Service, and which were to follow them as soon as possible? I affirm that there was. How that Reinforcement came to be applied to other Purposes, you best can tell, since it was thro' your Scramble for Power, thro' your Junto, thro' your Party Cabal, that a Dismission was  
given

given in that critical Conjunction to that Board of Admiralty, and the Minister with whom it was connected. The succeeding Board happened to be of a different Opinion from the preceding one, and the Reinforcement destined for the Attack of *Louisbourg* was (I do not say perverted but) converted to other Purposes. To *Cruise upon the Trade of France*, was, by that Board, thought the best Method of destroying the Enemy, and instead of a Chimerical Attack upon *Louisbourg* or *Roche-fort*, the Fleet of *England* was immediately exerted in what the *French* call the piratical Kind of War: A Kind of War, which I suppose, is the fittest for the Fleet of *England*, because the *French* ridicule it the most; and sure I am, that our maritime Officers not only applaud it the most, but seem of late Years to have turned their Thoughts to little else.

As soon as the six Week's Admiralty retired, and gave way to the present Board, and the present Minister was ordered to resume the Functions of that Office, which not a Man in *England* dare to fill after him, the *American* System resumed its Vigour. Such Ships as could be collected, tho' not equal, either in Strength or Numbers, to what had been originally destined to that Service, were immediately sent to reinforce those at *Halifax*: and

I do again affirm, and am prepared to prove, that, except a very short Time, in which the Squadron of Mr. *Holbourne* was, by the beforementioned Accidents, by a single Ship, perhaps, inferior to the *French*, he had under his Command, during the whole Summer, a Fleet superior to any Thing the *French* had at *Louisbourg*, or could, by any Means whatever, bring there, whether you consider the Number of Line of Battle Ships, the Number of Men on board, the Number of Guns, or the Weight of their Metal ; and yet almost the whole Maritime Force of *France*, so far as it could be manned, was, by Stratagem, collected there. Was it then so very absurd and romantic, that when their Maritime Force was drawn away to *America*, and their Land Forces engaged in *Germany*, the reserved Strength of this Country should be exerted in attempting a Blow so very decisive, as the taking of *Rockefort* would have been ? Why it miscarried, to this Moment I can hardly guess ; but sure I am, it was not through the Impracticability of it.

I have now, Sir, gone through the Consideration of your whole Performance, and if you are not tired with Reading, I confess I am heartily tired with Writing. I have endeavoured to keep as close as possible to the Subject,  
and



and, tho' often tempted, I have indulged few  
 Sallics of my Pen: If, now and then, you  
 should have found a little Deviation, a little  
 Playfulness of Imagination, forgive it. 'Tis  
 but a Copy of my Countenance: 'tis but a  
 forced Smile that covers a bleeding Heart:  
 A Heart broken, and bleeding for the Distress,  
 for the Disgrace of this Country. Where  
 alas! can we look, whither can we direct  
 our Hopes. Under which of those dark  
 Clouds that surround, and seem ready to burst  
 upon us, can we flatter ourselves there is a  
 Ray of Light that will break forth? To what  
 Purpose is it that we boast our Trade, our  
 Wealth, and our Credit? We are but so  
 many Sheep, whose Carcasses tempt the Wolves  
 to devour us. Where is the Glory of the  
*British* Name: where are the Terrors that  
 used to accompany our Fleets and Armies?  
 The Treasures of the Country are poured  
 forth in vain by an united and willing People.  
 Our Enemies are become invulnerable, and  
 every Blow our Ministers meditate, Impracti-  
 cable. In *Germany* their Ravages are not  
 stopped for a single Hour, for there were not  
 so many Men in the *German* as in the *French*  
 Army, therefore to check their Progress is Im-  
 practicable. In *America*, where our Troops  
 are at least double to those of the Enemy, to  
 check their Progress is equally Impracticable.

To

To destroy their Docks at *Rochefort*, a Town considered in *France* as an open Town, without Bastions, without Fortifications, without a Wall for its Defence, is Impracticable; for 'tis most certain there was a Ditch, and somebody said there was Water in it.

Such is the Sum total of the present Account of our military Operations, and can we look forward with a better Prospect? As to our Fleet, we have indeed been our own Undoers, and have killed the pampered Child with Kindness. We have destroyed the Principle which was the Source of our Glory. We have misguided the Ambition of our Seamen; we have tempted them with Wealth instead of Reputation; and we have substituted Avarice to Honour. We have at this Hour many who would make brave and excellent Corsairs, and I hope that in the long List we have two or three good Admirals.

As to the Army, the Soldiers are still brave, and, I am persuaded, will fight, whenever their Commanders will lead them on; there is some Comfort in that. But what are the Commanders? Read over the List of General Officers. I am sure you will agree with me, that those who were pick'd out as *chosen Men* to command the Expedition against *Rochefort*, at that time stood among the first for Character and Reputation. From their Conduct on this Occasion, we may judge what we are to expect for the future.

But alas! the Call, the Enthusiastic Call of Glory and Honour, is heard no more  
I among

among us; we are grown a solid and wise People; we have substituted Realities to Chimæras, and we seek after Essentials rather than empty, popular Applause. *Populus me sibilat, at mihi Plaudo.* Who is there, in this enlightened Day, who has not Courage enough to withstand popular Clamour? No Wonder! What does a Man get by being popular, and who is there that thinks any farther than *how he can get.* Is he a Soldier, of Family perhaps, of Rank, of P——y Connections, and fostered in the Bosom of some powerful Faction. Shall such a Man expose himself uncalled, uncommissioned by his Faction? Shall he brave Danger in order to serve *only* his Country, and at the same time, perhaps, encrease the Reputation of some absurd, chimerical Beggar of a Minister, who is Fool enough to think his Country worth serving under the most unpleasant Circumstances, and in the most dangerous Conjunctions. Why should he? His Faction will be powerful enough to secure his future Preferment: They will stand between him and Danger; they will rescue him from Punishment; they will rescue him from the Resentment of his S——. They will rescue him from every thing but DISHONOUR.

S I R,

*I am yours, &c.*

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## P O S T S C R I P T.

**T**H O' I have not in the Course of this Letter affected a Candour more than is common to those who engage in political Disputes, yet the Reader will think it extraordinary that I have not availed myself of the Intelligence lately brought from *Rochelle* and *Roche-fort* by the Captain of the Transport Vessel, who was a Prisoner in that Country at the Time our Armament came to that Coast. The Truth is, I disdained to prejudice the Mind of the Reader by a Testimony of that Sort, and I determined that he should judge of the Conduct of the Generals in this Expedition, from the same Evidence on which they might be supposed to act. But as his Opinion of the Generals, and their Conduct, is by this Time formed, it is a Debt due to Truth, and to the Publick to say (what is already well known to most of the Merchants of the City of *London*) that at the Time our Fleet was at the Isle of *Aix*, the whole Force which the Enemy had on that Coast consisted of a Battalion of regular Troops in the *Isle of Rhe*, another in *Oleron*, a *Swiss* Battalion at *Rochelle*, and one Regiment of Regulars, and one of Militia at *Roche-fort*. That the *Prudente*,

## P O S T S C R I P T.

*dente*, a French Ship of 74 Guns, with all her Cannon and Stores, &c. on Board, escaped our Fleet, by running up to *Rockefort*, thro' that very Channel which was not deep enough for an *English* Long-boat, and that the Consternation on the Coast was greater than could be expressed, it being understood that in the Course of a few Days, both *Rockefort* and *Rochelle* would necessarily fall into the Hands of the *English*, there being no Possibility to reinforce them 'till the Household Troops could arrive from *Versailles*.

3

# T H E S E C R E T   E X P E D I T I O N

Impartially disclos'd:

O R,

An authentick, faithful Narrative of all Occurrences that happened to the Fleet and Army commanded by

Sir E— H—— and Sir J— M——,

From its first sailing to its Return to England,

W I T H

Apparent Reasons for not landing the Infantry,  
and many other interesting Particulars, not yet  
made publick.

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By a COMMISSIONED OFFICER on Board the  
Fleet, and Graduate of the University, &c.

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*Per varios Casus per tot discrimina rerum .  
Tendimus———VIR.*

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(Price One Shilling.)



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T H E  
S E C R E T   E X P E D I T I O N

Impartially disclosed.

**A**S the eyes of all Europe, as well as those of our own nation, have been intent upon an expedition conducted with such profound secrecy and caution; that scarce an officer, (except Admirals and Generals) were acquainted with its destination, at least ten days after we embarked; so it may not be disagreeable to acquaint the publick of its progress; and as matters of plain truth appear most genuine, when they are neither embellished by rhetorical flourishes, nor clouded by long, tedious or laboured narratives; so shall the sequel be confined to a faithful, honest recital of facts and contingents; those who read with a finical curiosity will meet with an intended disappointment. And though these remarks were taken on board the fleet for

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private amusement, rather than intended for public perusal, yet as the minds of men seem yet in suspense, some particulars herein, may serve to set in a clearer light the whole matter, than what has already appeared.

The motives of this expedition I shall not presume to give my opinion about; but only take it from the infantry's landing in the Isle of Wight; leaving the reader to what inferences, his own reason and judgment suggest; but let him rest assured, that the plain *simplicity* of this journal bespeaks no desire of applause, unless any should *redound* from a candid relation of what daily happened, to a fleet justly looked upon as the *flower* of the British armament; and such as no nation upon earth at present but Great Britain, could send into the ocean; should I err in some terms of navigation, I flatter myself, they may be overlooked by those gentlemen bred up to this laudable and profitable Art.

July 25th, 1757, orders were received at the camp near Dorchester for three old battalions, — viz. Howard's, Wolf's, Kingfley's; to march to the Isle of Wight for embarkation; which battalions compleat both  
in

in officers and folders, appeared as fine troops as could be employed in any service; on the 29th. they landed from Southampton at Cowes, and came next day to camp on the forrest near Newport, on the same spot where the troops for Carthage, and also those for General Sinclair's expedition formerly pitched; the marks of these encampments, viz. kitchens, and other appearances still remaining on the ground.

About the same time arrived seven other battalions from different camps in England, viz. Bentinck's, Amhurst's, Cornwallis's, Hume's, Loudon's, Hodgson's, and Brudenel's, and were divided into two brigades, by Lieutenant General Sir John Mordaunt, viz. Buffs, Wolfe's, Kingsley, Hodgson's, Lord Hume's, under Major General Conway; and Lord Bentinck's, Cornwallis's, Brudenel's, Loudon's, Amhurst's, under Major General Cornwallis; who were all indefatigable in their care during their stay in this little but plentiful island, able to support twenty thousand troops without injuring its inhabitants. Scarce one day passed without exercising the men in the most useful parts of military discipline.

200 gabions and 100 fascines were ordered by Major General Cornwallis as a sample to be forthwith made; tools for that purpose, engineers to give directions, and officers to attend, viz. one Captain, two subalterns and 60 men; all regiments not mustered at the camps of Barham Downs, Dorchester, Hammarsham, and Chatham, to prepare their muster-rolls, and to hold themselves in readiness to embark: the number of waggon to be returned to take their baggage to the ships; each regiment to send a return of the strength they are to embark, the arms strictly to be examined, cartridges, each man to have seventy-two rounds on going on board; a return of the number of good flints to be sent to the head quarters; and the General expects all things fit for embarkation, and immediate service; the heavy or useless baggage to be immediately sent away, not more than three women allowed to a company.

But the transports delaying coming according to expectation, an entrenchment was thrown in the front of the line, the better to instruct the soldiers how to make attacks.—And as this was intended to teach the

the younger soldiers; each party was to be chang'd every three hours, that all might take share of the work, and be alike instructed. — A fascine battery was also formed in front of the camp, and a proper guard fixed; fascines of eight foot in length being made for that purpose.

Both officers and soldiers shewed a most sincere and undaunted resolution to exert themselves in the service of their prince and country. — Each battalion seeming ambitious in nothing, but to qualify themselves by exercise and fatigues of the field, the better to enable them to endure any future hardships that the hazards of war might expose them to.

Never were riot or excess more severely punished, nor order, sobriety, and discipline more generously rewarded. Divine service was ordered every day, and regularly performed at the head of each battalion, as often as regimental business would permit; and as a design to reform immorality, Sir John Mordaunt gave strict orders, that every chaplain should attend his corps, or find sufficient deputy, the better to promote piety, and derive the blessing of Heaven on our future atchievements.

A-

Among the acts of generosity to encourage the soldiers to their duty, one must not be omitted in the 20th regiment, Col. K———y, Lieut. Col. W———, and Major B———, with other captains of this regiment, considering as well the narrow subsistence of their subalterns, viz. lieutenants, ensigns and surgeons; as also the great danger of the private men's falling sick with living long on salt meats only——— made a purse of 200 pounds to buy fresh provisions; as well for the officers mess on ship-board; as the private soldiers, to have potatoes, cabbages and onions, to qualify the acrimony of salt provisions; a laudable example to other regiments, that the same corps which is a pattern in discipline, should study the health of their men; as well as form them a model in military evolutions.

Transports to embark these troops were daily expected——— but some accidental delays from the Downs to the Nore for the first fortnight, and the winds falling contrary afterwards, prevented their arrival till the 4th of September. The season now in most mens opinion was too far advanced to venture on an expedition, at least far from home;

home; provision laid in for four months only, proved it could not be to the West Indies, and therefore most people imagined it some descent upon the coast of France; which, however judged easy by those who are unexperienced in the art of war, either by sea or land; I flatter myself that these observations will in some measure satisfy the due care of both admirals and generals—— and that the—— *impracticability* of making a descent upon so powerful and provident an enemy *successful*, was not owing to any want of courage or conduct in our leaders or commanders; but to a seeming previous ignorance of the coastings of that part of France.

Nor is this any imputation upon a land officer's taking the command, who always both in sounding and sailing, depends on the experience of his sea commanders; for I'll venture to affirm, that before the sailing of this fleet, very few men in the kingdom ever drew their attention so as to observe the soundings of the Rade De Pasque; and the thing appears manifest, because since our arrival not one print shop in this opulent city, at most of which I've call'd, have any of  
these

these sea charts, or were ever asked for them except on Tower Hill, only for the use of the Navy. Pity it is they had not been accurately consulted, before we attempted a voyage of this nature. I am convinced it would have either prevented our setting sail ~~—~~ or at least an inglorious return.

After near six weeks spent on the Isle of Wight, to the great dissatisfaction of both commanders and inferior officers, as giving the enemy time to prepare, and retarding their eager desires to do their country justice: on the fourth of September arrived the transports at Cowes; never was an embarkation conducted with so much order and dispatch, on the 5th five battalions embarked, viz. Buffs, Kingsey's, Wolfe's, Hume's, Hodgson's, in great regularity and high spirits; to make the embarkation more easy and expeditious, they marched to different keys, and were taken off in men of war and press'd boats properly ranged for that purpose.

On the sixth the other battalions of the second brigade embarked also, and the same night most of the transports fell down to Spithead; after dropping anchor near Portsmouth for about ten hours, on the wind suddenly

denly turning south, a signal was made for all masters of transports to go on board the Agent; when a letter was delivered—with rendezvous at Torbay—not to be opened in case of separation, till they came to the westward of Scilly Islands; at eleven o'clock we weigh'd anchor and sailed directly for St. Helens, but the wind about four *p. m.* turning more southerly, most of the ships cast anchor there, but we being almost the sternmost ship, and the wind suddenly changing to N. W.——A signal was given by the Admiral to weigh, which was immediately done; we continuing sail now came up with the fleet, leaving the Isle of Wight to leeward that night, so that next morning we could just spy Swan Cliff and Dunnofe Point.

Such particular care was taken by the Admiral, before night came on, that sloops, tenders and men of war, were stationed on each side, almost in the form of an octagon, with the Admiral and transports in the center, as crouding under his wings for protection, against any hazard or danger of the enemy.

September the 9th, in the morning blowing a fresh gale to N. W. a signal was given



*Corfica* next was our conjecture, but provision laid in for four months only, and that Island laying too far up the Mediterranean to be of any considerable benefit to our trade, made us scarce think it an object worthy so *expensive* an embarkation; besides the French have many battalions on that Island, so that unless we could certainly have been joined by a great number of the inhabitants, we must there also have failed of success.

*Martinico* we could all eagerly wish for, but the distance with so small provision, and hazarding the flower of our troops so far abroad, and our ships being all unsheathed, as the worms in that climate would have ever after rendered them unfit for service, this therefore could not bear even a plausible appearance.

Thus while we were tossed about in the ocean, were our thoughts and judgments on the rack to find out this grand political arcanum. But as the list of ships already made publick have been deficient, I shall here set them down at large, with the number of infantry, light horse, &c.

*Ships*

*Ships of the Line.*

|                                                    | <i>Guns.</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Royal George                                       | 112          |
| Namur                                              | 90           |
| Neptune, Admiral Knowles, red division             | 90           |
| Ramilies, Admiral Hawke, blue division             | 90           |
| Magnanime                                          | 80           |
| Barfleur                                           | 80           |
| Princess Amelia, Admiral Broderick, white division | 80           |
| Royal William                                      | 84           |
| Torbay                                             | 74           |
| Burford                                            | 74           |
| Dublin                                             | 74           |
| Dunkirk                                            | 60           |
| Amelia                                             | 60           |
| Alcide                                             | 64           |
| Hercules                                           | 60           |
| Achilles                                           | 60           |
| Essex                                              | 64           |
| Jason employed as a transport to the               |              |
| Buffs                                              | 40           |

*Fri-*

*Frigates, Bomb Ketches, Tenders, Fire-  
ships, &c.*

Fire Drake

Infernal

Fireships

Plato

Hunter Cutter.

Bomb Tender.

Beaver.

Chesterfield man of war, to repeat signals.

Postillion.

Porcupine.

Canterbury Bufs.

Coventry.

Ethetis, Hospital Ship.

Southampton, *who on taking a prize, was  
forced to return to Plymouth.*

Transports 55, contracted for, from August  
20 1757, to January 20 1758, with 500  
fathom of cable to each transport; making  
15,000 ton at thirteen shillings per ton each  
month; 100 ton of gun powder in the artil-  
lery; 1100 ton to each regiment; the trans-  
ports had contracted not to go to America,  
East Indies, or coast of Africa; the govern-  
ment to pay for all captures of ships taken  
by

by the enemy, wreck'd by stress of weather,  
 &c. till January 20.

*Infantry.*

|                                         |      |
|-----------------------------------------|------|
| Ten battalions, 700 each, compleat      | 7000 |
| Two battalions of marines, viz. Effing- |      |
| ham's and Stewart's                     | 1400 |
| One troop of light horse                | 60   |

And as persons, unacquainted with sea af-  
 fairs, may have very imperfect ideas of the  
 weight and difficulty of conducting so large a  
 fleet, especially in so hazardous a part as the  
 channel, and the bay of Biscay: those who  
 would gain a more distinct information, I  
 would refer to the orders, rules and signals,  
 which are printed by the Admiralty, and de-  
 livered to every ship on such important em-  
 barkations.

Among the dreadful hazards of winds,  
 rocks and waves, in this boisterous element,  
 nothing gives a more feeling demonstration  
 of the difficulty of navigating a large fleet,  
 than the hourly peril of falling foul upon one  
 another, a severe instance we like to have ex-  
 perienccd this day, being the ninth of Sep-  
 tember,

tember, when by the interposition of a certain man of war falling between us and another transport, we were in the utmost danger of being sent to the bottom; this man of war hail'd us to get out of his way, which was readily complied with, by our navigating captain at the helm, but no sooner had his sails opened the prospect, but a transport, a head of this man of war, presented herself with her broadside to the head of our vessel, which, tho' sails were back'd, and all other means used, yet as she was in full sail, could not be prevented, but for us to run full on his broadside; luckily for him his Greenland boat was lashed to that side on which we fell; which being crushed to pieces, took off great part of the weight of our vessel, otherwise we must have bulged in his side, split our own ship, and inevitably sunk them both.

The hurry and confusion in both crews was inexpressible, some stunned with fear stood stupid, expecting every minute to be committed to the waves, others calling out for boats to take us into the adjoining ships; others swearing at the sailors; the soldiers however did great service, for tho' our bowsprit

sprit was closely entangled in their sails, and each ship impetuously bolting up by a reciprocal impulse, as if mechanically longing to devour one another; they catch'd up with a rare presence of mind, some long poles and handspokes, which darting with all force against the opposite ship, stem'd off their fury, and we soon got disentangled, tho' not without losing our bowsprit, and some of our foresails; — I can't help observing, what both crews can testify, that the wind blew very hard when first they met, but a very gentle breeze succeeded for half an hour, in which time we got entirely clear.

Nor was this the effect of imagination, but visible to those in the greatest hurry, as well as others who stood as idle spectators, for which we may thank providence, for preserving us from the jaws of the deep. I must also remark, that though the man of war was the occasion of the accident, that might have proved fatal to us both; yet he sailed away as unconcerned as if nothing had happened, though he afterwards said, he thought one or both must be sunk, or so damaged as not to be able to get to England, yet neither did

did he send out his boat, or offer the least assistance; so little regard was had to the lives of three hundred souls in his Majesty's service.

Next morning being September 10th, we repaired our sails and rigging, and made the best of our way; being, according to Hadley's quadrant, lat.  $50^{\circ} 1'$ , land out of sight, at three o'clock, *p. m.* being about two leagues astern of the fleet. The Coventry man of war was dispatched down to us, who spoke to our Captain to hasten up to the fleet; who also hailed a Dutch ship and some other transports astern of us; about five a cutter came down and hailed in a passionate manner our navigating Captain; asking him the reason why he was so much astern, was answered, we make all the sail we can, no time is lost; at six o'clock, another man of war came down to us, and said, *The Admiral is very angry you are so much astern*; this evening the whole fleet lay to, being near the Caskets, waiting till we and other transports came up with them.

11th of September, off Plymouth, almost in the center of the fleet, near Adm. Knowles, in the Neptune, who commanded the red  
divi-

division, another man of war coming after, called to us to get out of the way; seven o'clock, very near, Admiral Hawke, with six cutters or tenders about him, wind N. W. our ship making west; ten o'clock sailed by the fire-ship Pluto; twelve o'clock, lat.  $49^{\circ} 56'$  *per* Davis's quadrant, the *Ramilles* alongside, so deep a calm now, being off Edystone light house, and towards the coast of France, that forty-five boats had in tow a man of war who was going to speak with a ship in sight, having two cutters or tenders with her. The laying to these few hours was undoubtedly well judged, to try how the wind would settle, before we entered into the Bay, and also to have a little moon, and amuse the French scouts, who thereby might be kept in suspense whether we designed for Brest, Orient, or Rochefort, as also to know what the Southampton had done, who was dispatched off from the fleet in pursuit as above; and would it not been culpable to sail away from him with the whole, before we knew the event of the action?

September 12th, six o'clock, wind N. E. still lay by, and the Admiral's signal ordered



no ship to go a head of him. Still bearing up to land, wind fair.

September 13th, a fresh gale of wind to S. S. E. passed Lizard point about four o'clock, *a. m.* Another transport came foul upon us, broke our boat, lashed to the lee-ward side, but did us no farther damage; lat. 49° 10' alongside of Admiral Broderick, flag white.

The whole fleet now sailing large, stretching as far as sight could discern, made a most gallant appearance on the ocean, the *superbness* of the men of war, with their little smacks, tenders, and cutters around, waiting orders; the terror of the bomb-ketches, frigates, and fireships, the studious observance of the transports to their Admiral's signals and motions, just entering the turbulent Bay of Biscay, never before witness of so fine a fleet at this season, struck the mind with a solemn reverence to the Almighty Ruler of all events, which cou'd not be equally felt by any mind, but whose eyes added a sympathizing sensation of the horrors of war, and God's wonders in the deep.

What yet added to its magnificence, was at this very hour Captain Gilchrist in the  
South-

Southampton, came up again to us, his sails and rigging much shattered, followed by a French prize, English jack hoisted above the French colours red; this French frigate of 26 guns and 200 picked men, being a prime sailor, was sent out to watch the motion of our fleet; but falling in the calms, and not having equal number of boats to tow her, the Southampton came up with her, who at first made a feint of sheering off; Captain Gilchrist was at breakfast, and coolly ordered his men to breakfast also, making off, gave him time to prepare, and the Frenchman crowding all his sail, eagerly pursued; when the Southampton laying to, to receive him; never was there a more resolute engagement for twenty minutes, the officers of the French were all killed, two of them by the same shot of a blunderbuss, by Captain Gilchrist's own hand; the men fought each other with handspokes; and when the French had struck, what remained were so able seamen, that they derided the mean appearance of ours, though their conquerors, The Southampton received so much damage in this action, that she was obliged to return to England to repair. This is the  
second

second exploit this gallant officer has signaliz-  
ed his bravery and conduct, within this two  
months, for his Majesty's service, and the ho-  
nour of his country.

About four, *p.m.* the Admiral hoisted his  
white flag, and gave the signal of one gun,  
which was answered by another man of war,  
who bore down to him from toward; either  
on his return from looking after the South-  
ampton, or to inform the Admiral of the seas  
to windward. This evening also sailed by  
the Bedford, Captain Young, who seeing it  
would be difficult for us to part out of his  
reach, freed us from all apprehension, by as-  
serting his own courage, shewing the humane  
and good man, by steering between two shall-  
s, lest any accident should thereby befall  
them; a rare instance which I wish might  
become exemplary, especially when consis-  
tent with the honour of the flag. Wind N. E.  
a fresh gale five knots *per* hour.

September 14th. A thick fog and dead  
calm, the Admiral kept firing guns every  
hour, to let the fleet know his station; other  
ships also beat drums, rung bells, or made  
other noises to prevent accidents of running  
foak: ten o'clock in great danger of falling  
foul

foul on the Ramillies, the weight of which ship must inevitably have sunk us.

A fog also in a great fleet, to which this part of the Bay is very subject, is as well disagreeable as terrible, was it not generally as providence has ordered the air to be still, which is the natural cause of a fog, viz. the currency of the air being stopped from carrying off the vapours exhaled by the sun, 'twou'd be next to impossible to guide a number of ships in company with one another, when no observation can be taken of the meridians; but under apprehension of every hour falling upon rocks, vessels, the enemy's coast, steering a wrong course, or be separated with eyes open, yet not able to see. We supposed ourselves not far from Ushant point, but not certain; but luckily hailing one of Adm. Hawke's cutters; we asked what course he steered, who answered, S.W. by W. Thus we steered, and acquainted all ships we heard near us, which prevented many separations; signals of guns, &c. fired all this day and night around us.

September 15th. The fog a little cleared up, close in with the fleet, and near the Admiral, the ringing of whose bells, and whistling

tling of the boatswains, we could plainly hear; ten o'clock a signal from the Admiral to bring to. — Here it may be noted, that this day the first orders for landing were issued out, which in so large a fleet, cou'd not be done without much time, especially as the weather was yet very hazy; had it been later on the day, the expected return of the fog towards evening would have rendered it impossible for the agents to disperse to the several commanders, or adjutants to their separate corps these orders, and no time so proper, especially as both Admiral Broderick and Knowles had been separated by the fog. Lat.  $48^{\circ}$  one o'clock, a signal for all Captains of men of war to go aboard the Admiral; two o'clock Admiral Knowles and Broderick, with twelve ships of their divisions, joined us, who in the preceding night had steered westward, and thereby lost sight of the rest of the fleet. Very hazy, — a man of war's boat hail'd us to know of the William and Mary, on board which ship was the Captain of the train, Mr. Yorke. A cutter also had in tow two men of war's boats, with two adjutants on board, who could not find their own ships till eleven. Very hazy

zy weather, yet no signals from the Admiral was heard by us, which made us not know what course to steer, fearing to lay too near the French coast.

September the 16th, still hazy morning, half an hour past five o'clock a signal of ten guns from Admiral Hawke, answered by Admiral K — and B — ; at six a signal of one gun. — Cleared up a little, all the fleet around us steering S. S. W. the lieutenants of men of war ordered on board, and the Agent's signal, ordered all masters of transports on board him: this hour (eleven o'clock) the Royal William and Coventry men of war sailed by us, we hardly kept clear of them, they crossing our course, going off in pursuit of a French man of war, who probably, fell in with our fleet in the thick fog, and took the first opportunity after he perceived his mistake, to sneak off if possible undiscovered ; so that it was a mark rather of a bad look out in the Frenchman, but not so of our fleet, when for forty eight hours, we could not see our own bowsprit. Latitude  $47^{\circ} 41'$ , our land officer went to receive the *general orders* from his commander, which as they are already in every paper, I think it

unnecessary here to insert them; he then also brought with him, special orders for his regiment; which as they contain in British style, a Grecian spirit, I hope the liberty of inserting them without leave will be excused.

*Regimental orders to the ——— regiment.*

“ The major is so convinced of the zeal of the captains, that he knows many repeated orders on the present occasion unnecessary.

“ It may not be, however, improper to explain to the soldiers, the fatal consequences of straying ever so little in quest of plunder; it is next to a certainty they will fall ignominiously by the hands of the country people, or if they should escape, they may depend upon suffering death immediately, as disobeyers of military orders.

“ The soldiers of the ——— regiment, cannot be ignorant of the high reputation they have acquired in peace, for obedience, attention and expertness in arms, and consequently they must be sensible, how great things the captain general and all the mi-

“ military part of the nation expect from  
“ them.

“ The major takes the liberty to assure  
“ them, that they are able to fight any bat-  
“ talion upon earth ; and he is answerable  
“ that it will not be a combat of five mi-  
“ nutes, between this battalion and the best  
“ in France — whether the affair is decided  
“ by fire or bayonet, which last method  
“ when practicable, is always to be pre-  
“ ferred.

“ As the soldiers are to take but one  
“ change of linnen a-shore with them, it  
“ will be proper they shift themselves be-  
“ fore they disembark.

“ The soldiers to carry grogram in their  
“ canteens, in proportion of three waters  
“ to one brandy; this they are not to drink,  
“ till they have absolute necessity, as it is  
“ possible the wells and springs may be poi-  
“ soned by the enemy : the men are there-  
“ fore to be cautioned not to drink water till  
“ they are acquainted it is safe. One tent  
“ and two blankets to be packed together,  
“ two men without any knapsacks, of the eight  
“ in a tent, their things are to be carried by  
“ their comrades”.



This morning also the colonel of the same regiment (a brave and experienced officer) gave a sensible and pathetick exhortation to his soldiers.

“ We are now going, my lads, to engage  
 “ with an enemy, which though not equal  
 “ in valour, yet artful and subtle; what they  
 “ cannot execute by force, will endeavour to  
 “ effect by stratagem and craft. You have  
 “ been excellently forewarn’d by your major,  
 “ against the fatal consequences of straying  
 “ from camp, and let me remind you, that I  
 “ have known and seen the French use the  
 “ artifice of strewing bottles of their wine,  
 “ nay whole casks often poisoned, to entice  
 “ and tempt our soldiery to intoxicate them-  
 “ selves, when they despaired of repel-  
 “ ling the British prowess by any other me-  
 “ thod.

“ I don’t doubt the gallant behaviour of  
 “ my regiment, which has so often signalized  
 “ itself on emergent occasions, being confi-  
 “ dent you will all behave like men and sol-  
 “ diers; but let me redouble the caution,  
 “ beware of this snare in your marches or  
 “ counter-marches; and as drunkenness is the  
 “ bane of all order and discipline in an army,  
 fo

“ so now in particular, might it be one main  
 “ obstacle to our glory and success in this  
 “ momentary expedition ; I hope therefore  
 “ for your own sakes, for the honour of your  
 “ King and country, and me in particular,  
 “ you will avoid all appearance of being se-  
 “ duced from your duty, either by this, the  
 “ hopes of plunder, or any other temptation  
 “ that may be thrown in your way to invei-  
 “ gle you. You are led on by officers of  
 “ known courage and fidelity, who love you  
 “ well, who have never failed rewarding the  
 “ good, or discountenancing the bad, let me  
 “ rest assured therefore that you will do me  
 “ credit as your commander, by a vigorous ex-  
 “ ecution and resolute obedience to our com-  
 “ mands. Above all let me earnestly ex-  
 “ hort you to a compact union, and steady  
 “ connexion, in bravely exerting your power  
 “ with the bayonet in the time of attack ;  
 “ not to swerve from rank, nor wander at  
 “ any time from camp in hopes of plunder,  
 “ by which, and the Divine assistance, we  
 “ shall be able to vindicate a good cause, a-  
 “ gainst so perfidious and treacherous an ene-  
 “ my; and return home with the applause of  
 “ our own hearts, having done all in our  
 “ power

“ power for the service of our good and gra-  
 “ cious sovereign, and our dear and native  
 “ country, so much dreaded, envied and co-  
 “ veted, by that very enemy you are now  
 “ going to engage.

Seventeenth a calm morning, the fleet al-  
 together, steering E. by S. Lat.  $47^{\circ} 3'$  by  
 Davis's quadrant, and  $47^{\circ} 0'$  by Hadley's,  
 wind S.

We now judged the descent intended upon  
 Rochfort and Rochelle, in order to destroy  
 the king's dock at the first, and hurt their  
 trade by distressing the last. Which natu-  
 rally led us into various reflections and ob-  
 servations on those parts, as far as our sea  
 charts on board, and our knowledge could  
 lead. And being now in the center of that  
 mountainous boisterous bay of Biscay,  
 should a strong west, or north west wind  
 happen to take us, this *glorious fleet* would  
 be in the utmost danger of being dashed to  
 pieces on the French coast, which would be  
 a loss *irreparable* to the nation; therefore the  
 very ensuring an embarkation, where men,  
 ships, provision, ammunition, hospital stores,  
 &c. &c. could not be accounted of less value  
 than ten millions, besides the fate of England  
 if

if such disaster should befall us, made us debate whether Rochefort and Rochelle were objects worthy the expence and hazard incurred in so dangerous a part of the ocean ; many masters of transports, and seafaring men, declaring, that had they known the voyage was into the Bay, no consideration should have prevailed with them to have contracted with the government as transports.

With strict attention, we next fell to examine the best sea-charts, viz. Collins's, Halley's, and the charts of Paris, and were disagreeably surprized to see them all agree, that the soundings up the river to Rochefort, not exceed at ebb two fathom, in some parts one and a half, water, we thence concluded with reason, that the three deckers could be of no manner of service, nor could the bombketches or fireships be supposed to tide it up a rapid and strait river, lined with forts, curvings, and other annoyances, where if but one ship was sunk, either by the fire of the forts, or by other accident, she would retard the rest from moving up or down ; eighteen foot water, or three fathom, is the least any ship with weight of metal, &c. can venture

ture up an enemy's river. — To what purpose then were these ships of the line sent, where no naval force to engage on the seas could be expected, they surely were an incumbrance, where they could not assist in any attack.

As for Rochelle, we found it guarded with a sand at ebb — dry — so that even a bomb-ketch could not approach near enough to bombard it; what therefore could we now expect, when we with reason apprehended, that no ship of force could cover — that *nerve of the army*, the infantry's landing, nor batter forts, either inaccessible, or at best up a strait rapid river, where they must at half ebb lay broadside, or on ground, at the mercy of the enemy's fire.

September 19th, a rough sea and great swell in the middle of the fleet, sailing three knots *per* hour, E. by south, wind N. W. by N. lat. 46 25', at eight this eve, the Admiral gave a signal of eight guns, and the whole fleet brought too all that night, though a fair wind; the Royal William and Torbay, who sailed off in pursuit of the French 60 gun ship up the river to Bourdeaux — narrowly escaping the sands, gave out the chase; they

they had on board the only pilot who knew this coast, which might occasion our laying too, but greatly retarded our coming to anchor in the Rade De Pasque.

20th—— seven o'clock, a league a-stern of the fleet, wind N. E. a fresh gale, which rendered it difficult to fetch Oleron; lat.  $46^{\circ} 7'$ , Oleron four leagues south—at four *p. m.* espied land a head, E. S. E. seven leagues, eight at night we saw a light house, and guns fire from the French coast; 225 between flash and report. It being a known maxim in Pneumatics respecting the motion of light and sound, that sound moves (the air being equal) about one mile in the time a person may count moderately 25—on water—but less on land; as many objects interpose on the surface of the earth, to retard the undulation of the air——moving to the ear in an horizontal line; so that from this observation, we judged ourselves about three leagues from Oleron:

September 21, in sight of land, the tower or light house, on the north point of Oleron island, about two leagues distant, a cutter hailed us not to go ahead of the Admiral's ship. Seven o'clock wind N. and by E. Admiral Knowles, who was to command the

first division in full sail, making toward land; eleven, a gun fired by Adm. Hawke, answered by Admiral K——s, another signal to tack, about half past eleven; three guns fired by Admiral Hawke, and the bloody flag, or flag of defiance hoisted on the foretopmast-head; twelve, the flag suddenly taken down, being hoisted by the Captain without knowledge of the Admiral, who was said to express great resentment at this being done without orders. Admiral Knowles coming up as if to speak with Admiral Hawke, both bearing down to each other; then Admiral Knowles seemed to wear as if going into the road— But at two o'clock we shortened sail, according to Admiral Hawke, who was nothing but topsails, and four staysails close in wind—and shortly after lay too, Ad. K. making full sail, all the land officers, as by order of 15th, the soldiers provision, arms, and ammunition, being put up ready, and expecting to land that night, at eight o'clock we were all in full sail going in between Rhee and Oleron; but Adm. K. firing a gun, and making a tack, we all came to anchor about seven, *p. m.* near the isle of Rhee, wind

wind N. E.

22d, at seven o'clock in the morning, Adm. K. sailed by, hammocks up, sails crouded, ready to engage, at eight we all weighed anchor, and sailed between the islands of Rhée and Oleron, into a fine bay, called in the charts *Rade De Pasque*; expecting now, that having the day before us, the first division would have cleared all obstacles, and nothing would have retarded our attempt of landing that night at farthest; but no sooner were we come into the center of the road, which is so fine a bay, as 500 ships might safely ride, than at nine, *a. m.* a signal was given to cast anchor, we sounded, and found 23 fathom water, agreeable to the charts before cited, where a sinus from different currents meeting like a vortex, rendered our station the deepest water in this spacious harbour. We were about two leagues from Rochelle, which appeared by the churches, monasteries, and convents, a large and populous city, and were within sight of the sand dry at ebb, which guards it from a sudden surprise of being bombarded by sea. All the rest of the day and night we remained at anchor, not a little anxious at this delay.



the man at the helm appearing upon deck; till he came within sixty yards of the bastions of the garrison, when he began so furious a fire, that the *Monseurs* said something more than man must be on board that ship; the men in the garrison were so much terrified, that most of them clapped themselves down under the works of the garrison, and in the ditches, nor could be prevailed on to stand to their guns, which obliged the governor to strike the colours, and was no sooner done, than they all jumped up, taking snuff, dancing, and rejoicing, as if they had gained a victory.

The garrison ceasing fire, some sailors and mariners first landed, and the *Jason* with the battalion of the *Buffs* in boats, took possession of the island. There being only two marines and one sailor killed on board the *Magnanime*, and one man killed in the garrison, by a ball glancing off obliquely on his breast, where it remained fixed without force to penetrate through his body.

The governor on our taking possession, surprised us with saying to this effect, "*Messeurs*, — we expected e're now; we had an account of your sailing from *St. Helen's* the 7th,

7th, which made us remove all our valuable effects, so that you will now find but a poor island." The principal engineer met with a complement, that he'd now be happy, *you've got your friends about you.*

This fort, had it been completed according to old Manban's plan of military architecture, laid out and almost finished — might have given us great trouble. The parapets were raised to their proper height, but embrasures were not yet fix'd; else perhaps the French for — pusillanimity would not have been blam'd; in the fort were five hundred foldiers and two hundred sailors, yet no discharge of musquetry; which as the *Magnanime* was so near, might have greatly annoyed our marines on board; in the garriſon were found twenty guns, eighteen pounders, eight mortars, but few bombs were thrown, all which were either taken away or rendered useless. A great quantity of powder, ball, and ammunition in the magazine.

24th, still at anchor, wind contrary from going up the river to Rochefort: Nine o'clock a man of war's boat ordered us to weigh, and make between the Ramillies and  
Ro-

Rochelle; cast anchor again at once, *à commandement de guerre* per signal, on board the *Ramillee*. This day it was reported through the fleet, that the French had certainly sixteen battalions of five hundred each, with thirty thousand of well disciplined militia, about Rochefort and Rochelle; and that the King of France's household troops were coming down to Rochefort.

25th, all the transports ordered to sail to the N. E. end of the Isle of D'Aix, and this day we took boats to see the island and its fortifications; we found the rocks extend so far into the sea, that our boat struck two hundred yards from shore, which made it impossible for the Jason to sail near that corner. The instant we landed, the battalion of the Buffs were marching out of the barracks and garrison, to return aboard the transports.

The Island is not above one mile long, and about half a mile diameter, almost in an oval form, the soil, barren, sandy, and gravelly, and yet one continued vineyard; we went into one of about six acres, and were surprized to find their vines not higher than our gooseberry bushes in England. At first we thought it a young unbearing plantation; but going farther,

farther, we found great quantity of grapes of so delicious a flavour, as made us satisfied, we had never tasted a good grape before; they are planted not much unlike our hops in England, only thus differing, instead of throwing up earth, they hollow a cavity round each stem; raising up sand and gravel on each side, as well for the tendrils to rest upon in windy weather, as to make the rays of the sun more powerful reflected, and also to receive the falling rains in a basin; the old stems as big as a man's head, are open and near cut even with the surface of the earth; no luxuriant branches appear, which makes me imagine the way of pruning their vines adds to the fertility of their vintage, seeming at proper seasons to lop off all new-bearing branches to the very stem, to prevent bleeding, or that the juice may be re-sorb'd by the mother root; whereas we hold it dangerous to lop off the new luxuriant branches, they on the contrary seem to do it as being like suckers, impoverishing and hindering the fruit to come to maturity and perfection. And though this island is greatly exposed to the cold sea breezes, yet seeing such a fertility in each vineyard, I could not

but imagine that many warm exposures in England properly cultivated, might produce as fine grapes, tho' the experiments that have been already made have scarce answered the expectation.

From the vineyards we went into the town, where the streets were strewed with wooden shoes, some new, some old, some half scoop'd out, and a face of poverty appeared every where, scarce one inhabitant was to be seen, the greatest part having fled to the continent on sight of our formidable fleet; and though the strictest orders were given both by General and Admiral, against molesting the properties of the inhabitants, yet such is the rapaciousness of a conquering army, where wine was plentiful, that 'twou'd given a credit to our discipline, had there been no occasion of complaint.

Thence we went into the barracks, and offices adjoining to the garrison; where I met with one of the sacerdotal order, in his canonical habit, not unlike our batchelors of arts gowns, a grey venerable old man; on being introduced, I asked him, *Entendez vous Anglois?* he answered, — *oui, Monsieur*; and asked

me

me in English to walk into his house, which I did, and found it as dirty an habitation as I had ever seen; a large company were drinking in his room, but on his coming in they all got up and walked out; and on his saying to his servant, *Firmer la port*, we were left together; no sooner were we seated, but with great officiousness, a dirty cloth was laid on the table, and on his forgetting to speak English, asked me, *Voulez vous manger une pen?* I answered, *Si vous plait, Monsieur?* on which was set on very fine bread, but the wretchedest butter Englishmen ever tasted; on drinking a glass of Frontinack, I said, *I hoped he'd received no ill usage*, to which he answered, *Not the least ill usage, but all the civility, and even more than I could have expected in my situation*; which obliges me to make this remark, that though it has been reported since our return, that he had met with great abuse from our soldiers, yet as the regiment of Buffs, the instant I was with him were taking boat again, if he sustained any injury afterwards, it must be imputed to the sailors or miners at work to blow up the fort, and not to the fault of any of the land soldiers.

There were then three parties of miners at work; but they being too few, more were ordered from each regiment, who in parties continued working till the 30th, when the fortification, governor's house, and barracks, were at several explosions blown up, and the island quitted. Four men, viz. two sailors, and two soldiers of Lord Bentinck's regiment being blown up, and one serjeant having both his thighs broke, by a stone descending on him.

I can't pass over the appearance and mein of those I saw on the island and garrison, making some allowance for their dejection of spirit, being so soon subject to the will of conquerors. I never saw in any part of England a more squalid look, and more boorish demeanor. Tho' we in general reckon the ordinary people in France exceed ours in civility, and native politeness and address, which I take to be a prejudiced opinion. The only cattle I saw were six or seven very bad horses belonging to the governor, and a few horned cattle, principally for his use; some Indian wheat was also brought from thence by our officers.

Here also were we informed of sixteen battalions and thirty thousand militia, besides the  
in-

Invalids and workmen at the dock of Rochefort, all which cou'd in fix hours time be assembled; to oppose our attack; that the ditch was then full of water, and by opening the sluices the country could be laid under water for five miles round. Should our infantry land at Chatelaillon,---a deep morass and rivulet would retard their march, so that the artillery cou'd not get up without going 20 miles round into the heart of the country; that all men of war built at Rochefort, for want of water, were forced to tide it down the river at spring tides only, without guns or rigging, and be compelled with jury masts or tow, to go round to Brest to take in their guns and rigging, and that but one sixty gun ship had ever been built at Rochefort, but only 40 guns---in general, and that therefore our ships of the line, &c. could be of no use in such an attempt.

These relations coming from suspected persons had no great weight in our judgments, but we still retained expectation, that now this obstacle was removed, our landing would no longer be postponed; the opinion we retained of the skill of our sea commanders, made us rest assured they could not be  
guilty



guilty of so great an absurdity, as to bring ships of that force and weight of metal, where they could be of no manner of service; and flush'd with hopes of being in six hours on the French *continent*, we took boat and left the island, carrying a good quantity of fine grapes to regale our messmates aboard; having a strong gale against us, not without some danger of being drown'd, but heartily doused,—about 9 o'clock we got to our ship, though not without much difficulty to find her, our captain having neglected to hang us out a light.

And now we have left the island, let me return a few days longer to my journal aboard. This evening every boat that hailed us, we expected to bring us fresh orders to land, but going, tho' late, to repose, we found ourselves on waking (26 at morning) yet in the same tranquil station, in the Rade de Pasque; the air being very clear, we could now, by the help of glasses, see a long range of tents about one mile off shore, with an encampment of cavalry, as if march'd behind some woods, the advanced guards we could plainly discover on an eminence, which gave us great mortification; reflecting on our de-  
iays

lays and trifling away six days, when each moment seemed precious in the execution of our project. Cutters and small vessels were sent out all this day, to sound up the river Charente leading to Rochfort, but we could see them return, without advancing within gunshot of the fort La Foura; which standing on an eminence, seemed to us a strong fortification, we counted twelve embrasures pointing to the N. W. of the Rade, and could perceive men move——upon the parapets as seeming to prepare.

This night it was reported the expedition was at an end, but on a sudden orders came  
*“ for the soldiers to hold themselves in readiness, if they should be called upon to land  
 “ next morning.*

27th —— still at anchor, wind E. —— twenty more miners out of every regiment, ordered to work on the isled' Aix fortifications; and forty soldiers with ball, and bayonet fix'd, to keep guard on deck every night, and hail every boat or vessel that passed; if not answering in English after thrice hailing, nor giving the word, to fire in upon them; this caution was taken on a report, that the French intended to send out some galeashes, or small  
 fire-

fireships, in the dark nights, to annoy our fleet at anchor. A signal hung out for another council of war; on board the *Ramillies*, 28th; a return being made of provisions of the several transports the day before, an order this morning came from the general, that no water should be allowed to wash the linnen, even for the officers: all this morning two small French doggers, or galeashes, appeared in sight of the fleet, near the fort de Foura—who kept a continual fire on our small cutters, who seemed to be sounding between the French continent and the N. E. corner of the island of Day. At 11 o'clock at night came sudden orders, for all the troops to debark from the transports, on board the boats—and land silently. *Ramillies* 28th of September 1757, parol'd St. George—&c.

Which being also in every paper, I think unnecessary to insert.

In obedience to these orders Colonel K——y with Lieutenant Colonel Sir William Boothby, and Major Farquahar, who were to march at the head of the grenadiers, took boat before twelve, tho' about two leagues from shore, and a fresh gale full  
against

against them, which would have endangered many of the boats loaded with men, so crouded that they could only stand erect; they were tumbled in the swell till two o'clock, none coming to conduct them to the place of rendezvous; at last a cutter came down and say'd, "*you are ordered to ship again, for that the other regiments cannot be ready these two hours,*" Colonel K——y say'd "*I can hardly believe it; shew me your orders,*" on which was shewn a written order; at which all the soldiers made a *humming noise*; and they all went to their respective transports, the boats remaining still ready.

29th still at anchor, every minute expecting to land; two men of war sailed round the west side of the Isle D'Aix, as if sounding and trying to get up the river, but though they moved very slowly with little sail spread, we could often perceive them motionless as if on ground, and about twelve came back to the ships laying before the fort d'Aix: at two o'clock, *p. m.* the Agent gave orders for all masters of transports to follow Admiral H. on signal, and that no troops disembark without farther orders. All the ships of Admiral K. division came down from before

H

D'Aix

D'Aix into the open road.

30th still at anchor, wind N. E. orders from the Agent for transports to weigh and sail down to the Admiral——the captain of our transport went on board the Agent, and brought a letter not to be opened, but in case of separation ; this afternoon the fort of D'Aix in flames, and totally blown up:

September 1st wind N. E. the whole fleet after signal given, weigh'd anchor, and sailed for England, where we arrived the seventh, part of the transports being drove to the Downs by a hard gale—to N. W.

Thus have I accounted for every hour in the voyage, and let me put one short question ; if the sea charts are wrong, as some *would insinuate*, why did neither the transports approach shore, nor the ships of war venture up the river ; when it could not be expected that the small arms of the soldiery, could blow up docks, or batter forts, without assistance of our naval force.

F I N I S.

THE  
REPORT

OF THE

*Brit.*

GENERAL OFFICERS,

APPOINTED *to inquire into*  
*causes of failure of the Recent expedition.*  
By his MAJESTY's Warrant of the First of November 1757, to inquire into the Causes of the Failure of the late Expedition to the Coasts of FRANCE.

To which is prefixed,

A Copy of his MAJESTY's Warrant directing the said Inquiry.

WITH

An APPENDIX, containing the Papers referred to in the said Report.

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Published by Authority.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for A. MILLAR in the Strand. MDCCLVIII.

[Price 1 s. 6 d.]

100

GEORGE R.

**W**HEREAS we were pleased, in *August* last, to send a Number of our Troops on an Expedition against *France*, with Orders and Instructions to attempt, as far as should be found practicable, a Descent on the *French Coast* at or near *Rochefort*, in order to attack, if practicable, and by a vigorous Impression force that Place; and to burn and destroy, to the utmost of their Power, all Docks, Magazines, Arsenals, and Shipping, that should be found there; and to exert such other Efforts, as should be judged most proper for annoying the Enemy, as by our several Instructions to the Commander of our said Forces does more fully appear: And whereas the Troops sent for these Purposes are returned to *Great Britain*, no Attempt having been made to land on the Coast of *France*; concerning the Causes of which Failure we think it necessary that Enquiry should be made by the General Officers herein after named; in order that they may report those Causes to us, for our better Information: Our Will and Pleasure therefore is, and we do hereby nominate and appoint our right Trusty and right entirely beloved Cousin and Counsellor *Charles Duke of Marlborough* Lieutenant General, our Trusty and well beloved *George Sackville*, commonly called Lord *George Sackville*, and *John Waldegrave*, Major Generals of our Forces; to



examine and enquire touching the Matters  
aforesaid. And you are to give Notice to the  
said General Officers, when and where they are  
to meet for the said Examination. And the said  
General Officers are hereby directed to cause  
you to summon such Persons (whether the Ge-  
nerals or other Officers employed in the Expe-  
dition, or others) as are necessary to give Infor-  
mation touching the said Matters, or as shall be  
desired by those, who were employed in the Ex-  
pedition: And the said General Officers are here-  
by farther directed to hear such Persons as shall  
offer to give them Information touching the  
same; and they are authorized, empowered, and  
required, strictly to examine into the Matters  
before mentioned, and to report a State there-  
of, as it shall appear to them, together with  
their Opinion thereon. All which you are to  
transmit to our Secretary at War, to be by him  
laid before us for our Consideration. And for  
so doing this shall be, as well to you, as to our  
said General Officers and all others concerned,  
a sufficient Warrant. Given at our Court at  
*Kensington* this First Day of *November* 1757, in  
the Thirty First Year of our Reign.

By his MAJESTY'S Command,

BARRINGTON.

To our Trusty and well beloved  
*Thomas Morgan*, Esq; Judge  
Advocate General of our For-  
ces, or his Deputy.

# MINUTES

## OF THE

# PROCEEDINGS

## OF THE

# GENERAL OFFICERS, &c.

As annexed to their REPORT.

**A**T a Meeting of the General Officers appointed to inquire into the Causes of the Failure of the late Expedition to the Coast of *France*, at the Judge Advocate General's Office in *Privy Garden*, on *Saturday* the 12th of *November*, 1757, viz.

Lieutenant General, His Grace the Duke of *Marlborough*.

Major General, Right Honourable Lord *George Sackville*.

Major General, Honourable *John Waldegrave*.

The General Officers employed in the Expedition, viz. Sir *John Mordaunt*, Lieutenant General (who had the principal Command) and Majors General *Conway* and *Cornwallis* being called in, and all Persons who were desirous being admitted, his Majesty's Warrant directing this Inquiry was publicly read.

Read also the several Papers transmitted to the Judge Advocate from Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, and two Orders transmitted from the Admiralty in consequence of an Application from the General Officers appointed to make this Inquiry, viz.

1. Copy of a Letter, dated *London* 15th *July*, 1757, from Captain (now Lieutenant Colonel) *Clerk*,

to Sir *John Ligonier*, and transmitted to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, with regard to *Rocheport*.

2. Minute, dated *Arlington Street, August 1757*, containing an Examination of a *French Pilot*.

3. *Memoire sur la Force actuelle de la France, et les Services auxquels elle est employée dans l'Année 1757*—received *July 28, 1757*, and communicated, at a Meeting at Lord *Holderness's* House, to the Generals appointed on an Expedition to the Coasts of *France*.

4. Copy of his Majesty's secret Instructions to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated *August 5, 1757*.

5. Copy of his Majesty's secret Instructions to Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated *August 5, 1757*.

6. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated *August 5, 1757*.

7. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Major General *Conway*, Major General *Cornwallis*, Vice Admiral *Knowles*, and Rear Admiral *Brodrick*, dated *August 5, 1757*.

8. Copy of a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Spithead, August 7, 1757*.

9. Copy of a Letter from Major General *Cornwallis* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Newport, Isle of Wight, August 6, 1757*.

10. Copy of a Letter from Vice Admiral *Knowles* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Portsmouth, August 6, 1757*.

11. Copy of a Letter from Rear Admiral *Brodrick* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Portsmouth, August 6, 1757*.

12. Copy of an Order from the Lords of the Admiralty to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated *August 5, 1757*.

13. Copy of an Order from the Lords of the Admiralty to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated *August 6, 1757*.

14. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Isle of Wight, August 11, 1757*, Ten at Night.

15. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, to Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated *August 13, 1757*.

16. Copy

16. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated Head Quarters, *Newport*, August 20, 1757. Inclosing,

17. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to *Thomas Orby Hunter*, and *Gilbert Elliott*, Esqts. dated August 17, 1757.

18. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated August 23, 1757.

19. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated August 23, 1757. Inclosing,

20. Copy of a Letter from Mr. *Cleveland* to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated August 19, 1757;

21. Copy of a Letter from Mr. *Cleveland* to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated August 20, 1757;

22. Copy of a Letter from Mr. *Cleveland* to Mr. *Cockburne*, dated August 21, 1757;

23. Copy of a Letter from Mr. *Cockburne* to Mr. *Cleveland*, dated August 23, 1757.

24. Copy of a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Portsmouth*, August 25, 1757.

25. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated September 5, 1757, Four o'Clock in the Afternoon.

26. Copy of a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Ramilies at Spithead*, September 6, 1757.

27. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Portsmouth*, September 6, Nine at Night.

28. Copy of a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Ramilies at St. Helens*, September 8, 1757.

29. Copy of a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Ramilies at Sea*, September 10, 1757.

30. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated September 15, 1757, by the *Viper* Schoop.

The above Papers containing all the Orders and Instructions which appear to have been signified to the Commanders of the late Expedition, it was publickly asked, Whether any Person had any Information to offer, tending to shew the Causes, why the said Orders were not carried into execution, or why the Expedition has failed?—And any such Person, being present, was desired then to declare the same, in order to his withdrawing for the present, with Assurance, that he should, in convenient Time, be fully heard: And no Person offering himself,

*Ordered*, That all Persons summoned as Witnesses, do withdraw into a Room appointed for that Purpose, until called for, in order to their being examined separately.

Then proceeded to read other of the Papers received from Mr. Secretary Pitt's Office, viz.

31. Copy of a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke* to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated *Ramilies* in *Basque Road*, September 30, 1757. Inclosing,

32. Copy of a Report made to Sir *Edward Hawke* on board the *Ramilies*, September 24, 1757, by Rear Admiral *Brodrick* and others;

33. Copy of a Council of War held on board the *Neptune*, September 25, 1757; the same as the Original delivered by Sir *John Mordaunt*, soon after his Arrival, to Mr. Secretary Pitt;

34. Copy of a Council of War held on board the *Ramilies*, September 28, 1757; the same as the Original delivered by Sir *John Mordaunt*, soon after his Arrival, to Mr. Secretary Pitt;

35. Copy of a Letter from Rear Admiral *Brodrick* to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated *Achilles*, Tuesday Morning, One in the Morning;

36. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated *Ramilies*, Thursday Evening, September 29, 1757.

37. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated *Ramilies*, *Rade de Basque*, September 30, 1757.

38. A Paper purporting to be Minutes of a Council of War assembled on board his Majesty's Ship *Ramilies* in *Basque Road*, the 28th of *September*, 1757, and appearing by the Indorsement to have been delivered by Sir *John Mordaunt*, soon after his Arrival, to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, being about to be read,

Sir *John Mordaunt* said, That he did not mean to object to the reading of the said Paper, but begged leave to observe, that the Minutes now produced, were taken down without the Knowledge of the Persons, who composed the said Council of War, and never seen by the Gentlemen, whose Names are thereunder written; and that the first Knowledge he (Sir *John Mordaunt*) had of them, was from a Copy delivered to him by Sir *Edward Hawke's* Secretary, Mr. *Hay*, after his Arrival at *Portsmouth*. That upon seeing them, he attempted to prevent Sir *Edward Hawke's* sending them up to *London*; but his Application was too late. Sir *John Mordaunt* added, That some little Time after his Arrival in *London*, understanding that he ought, as Commander in Chief of the Land Forces, to deliver Copies of the Councils of War, and any other material Papers, to Mr. *Pitt*, his Majesty's Secretary of State, in like Manner as Sir *Edward Hawke* had done, as Commander of the Fleet, he did so, and delivered the said Copy of Minutes received from Sir *Edward Hawke's* Secretary among the rest.

Sir *John Mordaunt* being asked, Whether at the Time of his delivering a Copy of these Minutes to Mr. *Pitt*, he observed to him, that they were not authentick?

Answered, He does not recollect, that he did.

Then the said Minutes were read, in Presence of the several Persons hereafter-mentioned, Members of the said Council of War, who were severally called upon for their Information, Whether the said Minutes are authentick, and taken down with their Privy? viz.

1. Vice Admiral *Charles Knowles*, who disavowed these Minutes intirely, saying that he never saw them,  
until

until they were shewn to him after his Arrival in London.

2. Rear Admiral *Thomas Brodrick*, who said, that he did observe Minutes taken, and remembers he objected to it, but never saw these Minutes; and mention being therein made of Sir *John Mordaunt's* retiring with him (Rear Admiral *Brodrick*) and others, observes that he remembers Sir *Edward Hawke*, Vice Admiral *Knowles*, and himself retiring, but does not recollect Sir *John Mordaunt's* going out with them. — He further says, that he, at the Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*, went off to Admiral Sir *Edward Hawke* at *Spithead*, in Hopes of preventing these Minutes being sent up to *London*, but that unluckily they were sent away before he reached the Admiral.

3. Major General *Conway*, who says, that to the best of his Memory, these Minutes were never communicated to him, and knows it was agreed upon not to have any Minutes taken.

4. Major General *Edward Cornwallis*, who says he never saw the Minutes in question, until shewn to him at *Portsmouth* to his very great Surprise.

5. Colonel *George Howard*, who says, he never saw these Minutes till Sir *John Mordaunt* shewed them to him after their Arrival at *Portsmouth*.

Vice Admiral *Knowles* being, at his own Desire, again called in, desired to supply an Omission in his former Evidence, viz. That he recollects there was a positive Determination, that no Minutes should be taken, but that the Informations only of the Persons examined, should be noted down.

Major General *Conway* observed, That, as he understood it, not even what the Witnesses said was intended to be made publick, or to stand Part of the Minutes of the Council of War, so as to be transmitted to any Person.

Vice Admiral *Knowles* confirmed the same; adding, that he never heard their Examination read.

Read the Remainder of the Papers received from Mr. Secretary *Pitt's* Office, viz.

39. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Ramilies*, *October 4*, 1757.

40. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Portsmouth*, *October 6*, 1757.

41. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated *October 7*, 1757.

42. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated *October 7*, 1757.

43. Copy of a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Ramilies at Spithead*, *October 8*, 1757. One P. M.

44. Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Portsmouth*, *October 8*, 1757.

The several Papers transmitted to the Judge-Advocate, and by him laid before the Board, being read, and no Person offering to give them any Information touching the Causes of the Failure of the Expedition,

Sir *John Mordaunt*, as Commander in Chief of the Land Forces employed therein, was asked, What have been the Reasons, if he has no Objection to laying them before the Board, which have prevented his Majesty's Instructions and Orders from being carried into Execution?

Who replied, that to prevent Trouble, and that the Matter may be the better understood, as his speaking is attended with Difficulty, he had committed the whole to writing, from Beginning to End, and delivered to the Board a Paper, as containing the same, which was, at his Desire, read in Words following, viz.

" In order to give all the Satisfaction in my Power, I have reduced into Writing the fullest Account of the whole Matter I am able to give.

" When I first received his Majesty's Commands in regard to this Expedition, I was told, that the Object of it was to make a Diversion on the Coast of France.

" That



“ That as far as respected *Rocheport* in particular,  
 “ it was on the footing of a *Coup de Main*, or Sur-  
 “ prize, and that consequently, if the Design was  
 “ discovered, or the Alarm taken, it would be next  
 “ to impossible to execute it.

“ I also understood, that unless a proper Place for  
 “ the Landing, and safe Retreat of the Troops was  
 “ discovered, particularly where the Ships could pro-  
 “ tect them, and a safe Communication with the  
 “ Fleet, and Conveyance of Supplies from it was  
 “ secured, the Attempt could not be made.

“ In Confirmation of which I beg leave to take  
 “ Notice of two Paragraphs in a Paper given me  
 “ upon this Occasion by Sir *John Ligonier*, Com-  
 “ mander in Chief of his Majesty’s Land Forces,  
 “ whose long Experience, and great Abilities in the  
 “ Art of War, will surely vindicate any Officer who  
 “ is guided by so good an Authority; containing  
 “ his Observations on the intended Expedition;  
 “ which Paper, as I remember, was read before the  
 “ Council.

“ The Paragraphs I mean, are as follows:”

“ If an Attempt is to be made on *Rocheport*, it  
 “ will be the Part of the Admiral, to know the Coasts;  
 “ to bring the Troops to the nearest Place; to co-  
 “ ver their Landing by the Disposition of his Ships;  
 “ and to destroy any Barbet Batteries which the Ene-  
 “ my may have on the Shore; still remembring, that  
 “ if the Troops are landed at too great a Distance  
 “ from the Place, the Design will become dangerous,  
 “ and probably impracticable.”

“ The second Paragraph,”

“ A safe and well secured Communication between  
 “ the Camp and the Sea, from whence you are to re-  
 “ ceive your Supplies of all Kinds, is absolutely ne-  
 “ cessary; the whole depends upon it; but this being  
 “ done, I should not be much in Pain for the Safety  
 “ of the Troops; an inferior Number dares not ap-  
 “ proach you, and one superior will not be easily af-

• fsembled

“sembled without your knowing it; and, at all Events, you have secured a Retreat to the Ships.”

“I also thought it clear from the State of *Rotbelfort*, as described by Colonel *Clerk*, and afterwards by the *French* Pilot, that though it should have remained in the same Condition as when they saw it, which was not later than three Years past, yet a few Days Preparation would make it sufficiently defensible against a *Coup de Main*: For which Reason, judging the Dependence on such an Operation alone improper, in an Expedition of this Sort, I applied to his Majesty's Ministers in Council, for two more Old Battalions, and Artillery for a regular Attack, to force the Place, which, I thought, from its Construction, as difficult to be made defensible against a regular Attack, as it was easy to secure it against an Assault. And although it was not thought fitting to comply with this Request, yet his Majesty having ordered me to take the Command of the Expedition, upon the Footing it was planned, I thought it my Duty to obey; understanding, that my Instructions gave me Latitude to act according to the best of my Judgment, regarding the Circumstances of the Time, the Condition of the Place, and the Nature of the Service; and where any Difficulty arose, or the Importance of the Subject required it, a Power to call a Council of War.

“Positive and credible Intelligence received, as well before the Embarkation, as during the Voyage, traced the Alarm; and the Preparations along the *French* Coasts, from *Brest* and *St. Maloes* quite down to *Rochefort*.

“A Letter from a *French* Officer superintending the Batteries near *Brest*, to the Captain of the *Emerald*, taken and brought into the Fleet by Captain *Gilchrist*, describes the Preparations which had for some Time been making there; and that Troops were not wanting on the Coast, there being at that Time near seven thousand regular Troops  
“ on

on one Side the *Brest* Water; and more on the other Side, besides the Militia.

A Letter from Captain *Cleveland* declares, that on *Wednesday* the 17th of *August*, he spoke with a *Dutch* Convoy from *Rockelle*, and that a first Lieutenant came on board him, and told him, that the *French* expected the *English* at *Rockelle*, but were not alarmed.

It was afterwards confirmed to us on the Voyage by the Master of a *Dutch* Ship from *Vannes* in *France*, to *Dort*, spoke with by Captain *Proby* of his Majesty's Ship *Medway*, on the 11th *September*; that the *French* expected to be attacked at *Rockelle* or *St. Martins*, by the *English*: Also, that an Embargo was laid on all Shipping in *France*.

After all the several Indications and Intelligences mentioned, it was impossible to doubt, that there was a general Alarm spread, and still more so to imagine, that a Place like *Rockefort*, the second certainly in Importance on the whole Coast, should, after such Warning, be totally neglected.

The Voyage being tedious, we did not make the *French* Coast till the 20th of *September*, about Noon.

It was the 23d before we got into the Road, and that Day made ourselves Masters of the Isle of *Aix*. The same Day Admiral *Brodrick*, with four Captains, was sent to sound the Coast, and find out a proper Landing place. The same Night also the Admiral declared, that the Fort of *Pouras* should be battered; and in Consequence of that, ordered the Pilot of the *Magnanime* to be sent for, in order to be examined upon that Head, who next Morning declared, a Ship might be brought up at a proper Distance to silence that Fort.

The next Morning, being the 24th, a Plan for landing the Troops as near the Fort of *Pouras* as possible, while one or more Ships battered it on the Water-side; and proposing also a Feint to be made on the Side of *Rockelle*, and the Isle of *Rhé*, was given

" given in by the Generals; but the Admiral now  
 " approving of the Feint to be made, and declaring,  
 " that *Fouras* could not be battered from the Sea,  
 " without hazard of losing the Ship, the Admiral  
 " and Captain, who returned, and made the Report  
 " on the landing about One o'Clock also declaring,  
 " That between the Fort of *Fouras* and *Rochelle* they  
 " had found only two Landing-places, which were  
 " both near the Point of *Chatelaillon* on the open  
 " Bay, and where the Water was so shoal, that no  
 " Ships could lye up to cover the Landing, or se-  
 " cure the Retreat of the Troops: Upon these Con-  
 " siderations, as well as upon other Intelligence I had  
 " received in relation to the Place itself, I did, ac-  
 " cording to the Latitude I understood to be in his  
 " Majesty's Instructions, and agreeably to the Powers  
 " therein given me, think it my Duty, in so import-  
 " ant and critical a Case, to desire a General Council  
 " of War, to take into Consideration what was pro-  
 " per to be done in Execution of his Majesty's Secret  
 " Instructions. That Council, composed equally of  
 " Land and Sea Officers, having considered the  
 " Nature of the Landing on the one Hand, and  
 " of the Attack to be made on *Rochefort* on the  
 " other, the Officers were unanimously of opinion,  
 " That an Attempt upon *Rochefort* was neither ad-  
 " viseable nor practicable. I concurred in that Op-  
 " nion, and thought that neither my Duty, nor Re-  
 " gard for his Majesty's Service, permitted me to  
 " depart from it.

" And that our Reasons for so doing may more  
 " fully appear to this Court, I will state, as clearly  
 " as I can, the Grounds upon which we proceeded.

" *First*, In Confirmation of what has been already  
 " mentioned in regard to the Landing, the Opinion  
 " of so many Sea Officers of the greatest Judgment  
 " and Experience seemed absolutely conclusive. To  
 " this was added the Declaration of the most knowing  
 " and able Pilot in the Fleet, who said, that with  
 " westerly Winds, which set in from the Bay of *Bis-*  
 " *cay*,

" say, he has known such a Sea in that Road, that  
 " he himself was kept many Weeks on Board his  
 " Ship, without being able once to go on Shore.  
 " And as in the Opinion of all, or most of the Sea  
 " Officers, both westerly Winds and blowing Wea-  
 " ther were daily expected at this Season of the  
 " Year, it must appear, that the Risque of sending  
 " the Troops ashore, under the Circumstances de-  
 " scribed, could by no Means be justified, though  
 " there had been a better Prospect of Success than  
 " there was, in regard to the Attempt on *Roche-*  
 " *fort*; as in all Cases of a Descent, particularly of  
 " a Descent upon the Continent of *France*, a secure  
 " Retreat for the Troops, and a constant Communi-  
 " cation with the Ships, from whence alone the  
 " Troops are to draw their Provision and Ammuni-  
 " tion, must be attended to by those to whom his  
 " Majesty trusts the Command of his Troops, as ab-  
 " solutely necessary; and that upon which the Ser-  
 " vice wholly depends.

" In regard to the forcing of *Rocheport*, the weak-  
 " est Part of the Place, according to the first Intel-  
 " ligence of it, was at an Opening on the west Side  
 " of the Rampart, said by *Thierry* the Pilot, to be  
 " about sixty Yards in Length; but as this laid by  
 " the River, where the Ground was in general low,  
 " marshy, and cut with Ditches, into which the Tide  
 " flowed, and also by *Thierry* the Pilot's Evidence,  
 " was closed with a Pallisade, it is plain, a few Days,  
 " nay, a few Hours Work must make it defensible  
 " against a *Coup de Main*; as it is known, a good  
 " Intrenchment may be thrown up, in soft yielding  
 " Ground like that, in twelve Hours Time, and by  
 " lying on the Water Level, the Ships in the River  
 " would intirely command it, as the Pilot declared,  
 " they did command all the Ground by the Water-  
 " edge; and that, in the present Case, within less  
 " than half Musket-shot, which was a better Defence  
 " than the Flanks of any Bastions.

" As

" As to the rest of the Circumference, the Rarti-  
 " part was generally proved to be strong and high,  
 " with a Ditch, which two Witnesses declared posi-  
 " tively, they themselves had seen full of Water  
 " quite round; by means of Sluices in the Town;  
 " and, though the chief Engineer did not think the  
 " Ditch capable of being flowed, yet if it was so, he  
 " thought it not practicable to take the Place by  
 " Escalade.

" Many of the Prisoners declared there were Num-  
 " bers of Troops upon the Shore; both Regulars  
 " and Militia, and even named particular Regi-  
 " ments.

" What seemed certain on the whole was; that tho'  
 " even after all the Alarm there was on the Coast,  
 " it was possible there might not be an Army assem-  
 " bled to engage us in the Field; yet it seemed highly  
 " improbable, that there should not be a sufficient  
 " Force to make a good Garrison in the Place.  
 " There were also great Numbers of Workmen be-  
 " longing to the Docks; and the Crews of the Ships  
 " then in the River, if compleat, amounted to near  
 " 3000 Men.

" It must also be considered, that though no  
 " Alarm should have been taken before we came  
 " within Sight of *Oleron*; which was on the 20th,  
 " it was from that to the 24th, when the Report of  
 " the Sea Officers was made, five Days inclusive;  
 " we must have been two Days more in Landing the  
 " Army and Stores; and had then, as we are in-  
 " formed, a March of eight or nine Miles to the  
 " Place, which must be made on the eighth Day  
 " from the Time we were seen on the Coast. There  
 " could be therefore no hopes of a Surprise; and as  
 " there was then a *Mareschal of France* in or near  
 " the Place, it is impossible, but such Precautions  
 " must have been taken, as no Officer of any Capa-  
 " city, or Experience, in the *French Army*, could  
 " have neglected. Add to this, that it was now full  
 " Moon, and the Nights were almost as light as

“ Day : So that to think of surprizing, or assaulting  
 “ a Place, under all these Circumstances, it is pre-  
 “ sumed, must appear contrary to the Nature of  
 “ that Operation, and to all the Maxims laid down  
 “ by every military Writer of Distinction ; such  
 “ Attacks being, it is apprehended, only to be made  
 “ where you can run upon a Place in a Night’s March,  
 “ and where you are by previous Intelligence, ac-  
 “ quainted with the Numbers and Nature of its  
 “ Garrison and Guards, the Neglect of its Rounds  
 “ and Defence, the exact Height of its Ramparts,  
 “ and the State of its Ditch, Draw-Bridges, Gates,  
 “ &c.

“ This I think is a fair Representation of the  
 “ Prospect I had in that Undertaking ; which, in the  
 “ Opinion of the whole Council of War, could not  
 “ justify the exposing His Majesty’s Troops, by  
 “ landing them without any Security for their  
 “ Supplies, or for their Retreat.

“ The great Object of the Expedition having  
 “ thus been found impracticable ; that we might  
 “ not remain inactive, while the Engineers were  
 “ demolishing the Fortifications of the Isle of *Aix*,  
 “ we did our utmost Endeavours to discover, how  
 “ we might annoy the Enemy by any other Means.  
 “ The next Day after the Council of War, being  
 “ the 26th, was spent in examining Witnesses, and  
 “ gathering Information, that we might judge if it  
 “ would be adviseable to make a Descent on the Isle  
 “ of *Oleron*, and to see if we could find out a land-  
 “ ing Place, from whence any Service could be done.  
 “ Evidence was examined concerning the Situation  
 “ of *Fouras*. The next Morning we went to re-  
 “ connoitre it from the Isle of *Aix* ; there was some  
 “ Difference of Opinion in regard to an Attempt  
 “ upon it, but we came to no final Resolution ’till  
 “ the Afternoon, when a Proposal was made to  
 “ land at *Chatelaillon*, and make a sudden Attack  
 “ upon *Fouras*, and the other Forts leading to, and  
 “ upon the Mouth of the River *Charante*, with the  
 “ Land

" Land Forces. A Council of War was ordered  
 " to meet in the Morning; and that Council was  
 " unanimous for attempting it that very Night.

" The necessary Orders were immediately given;  
 " and about One o'Clock, the Grenadiers and great  
 " Part of the Troops, who were to land with me  
 " in the first Embarkation, were on Board; when a  
 " strong Wind blowing from the Shore, the Officers  
 " of the Navy appointed to conduct the Landing,  
 " represented, that it was with Difficulty the Long-  
 " boats could make Way; that it would be Day  
 " before the first Embarkation could get to Shore:  
 " And that it would be five or six Hours more, be-  
 " fore the Troops first landed could be supported  
 " by a second Embarkation. Add to this, that the  
 " Boats belonging to the Transports would scarce be  
 " able to get on Shore at all. For these Reasons,  
 " the Generals found the Forces could not be  
 " landed that Night.

" The next Morning, Sir *Edward Hawke* acquainted  
 " Major General *Conway* and me, that if the Gene-  
 " ral Officers had no farther military Operations to  
 " propose, considerable enough to authorize his de-  
 " taining the Squadron under his Command longer  
 " there, he intended to proceed with it for *England*  
 " without loss of Time. I made answer, that I  
 " would summon the General Officers to consider  
 " of an Answer; and I desired him to signify his  
 " Intentions in Writing; which he did in a Letter  
 " to me. Hereupon I summoned all those Land  
 " Officers, who had been Members of the Councils  
 " of War. We then took Sir *Edward Hawke's* Let-  
 " ter into Consideration; and the small Importance  
 " of the Enterprize against the Forts did not appear  
 " to us a sufficient Motive to justify us in detaining  
 " His Majesty's Fleet. We understood the Fleet  
 " was to be employed in more considerable Services,  
 " after this Expedition was over; and we had  
 " learned from the Officers of the Navy, that near  
 " this Time the *French* Fleets from *Martinico* and



“ *Louisbourg* were expected. These Considerations, together with the Limitation of the Time for our return to *England*, induced us to consent to Sir *Edward Hawke*’s Proposal.”

*Adjourned till Monday next the 14th Instant, at 11 o’Clock.*

“ At a Meeting of the said General Officers appointed to enquire into the Causes of the Failure of the late Expedition, &c. (pursuant to Adjournment) on *Monday* the 14th of *November*, 1757.”

Read a second Time Sir *John Mordaunt*’s Narrative, when he was desired to lay before the Board the whole of the Paper he had from Sir *John Ligonier*, from which he has quoted two Paragraphs; and the same was read as follows, viz.

“ There is a Chance in the best concerted military Enterprizes, which every Man of long Service must have experienced; what Share then must be left to Fortune in an Expedition, where neither the Country, nor the Number of Troops you are to act against, is known with any Precision.

“ The Capacity of the Generals may supply this Want of Intelligence; but to give them any positive Plan, or Rule of Action, under such Circumstances, I apprehend would be absurd.

“ If I am rightly informed, the great Point His Majesty has in View by this Expedition, and the alarming the Coasts of *France*, is the Hopes of making a powerful Diversion in Favour of H. R. H. the Duke, as well as the King of *Prussia*, who desires and presses much this very Measure.

“ In the Execution of this general Plan, a Project of giving a mortal Blow to the naval Power of *France*, is in his Majesty’s Thoughts, by attacking and destroying, if possible, the Dock, Shipping, and naval Stores at *Roche fort*. A Plan of that Place, given by one of his Majesty’s Engineers,

"mers, who was there in 1754, seems to encourage  
 "the Attempt; and it must be owned, that without  
 "such Authority, it could hardly be believed that a  
 "Place of that great Importance could be left in so  
 "defenceless a Condition.

"In all doubtful dangerous military Attempts,  
 "the Advantages that may accrue from Success,  
 "ought to be weighed against the Damage and Mis-  
 "fortunes, that may be the Consequences of a Re-  
 "pulse; and that well considered, may in Prudence  
 "determine the Choice.

"If an Attempt is to be made upon *Rockefort*, it  
 "will be the Part of the Admiral to know the Coasts,  
 "to bring the Troops to the nearest Place, to cover  
 "their Landing by the Disposition of his Ships,  
 "and to destroy any Barbet Batteries, which the  
 "Enemy may have upon the Shore, still remem-  
 "bering, that if the Troops are landed at too great a  
 "Distance from the Place, the Design will become  
 "dangerous, and probably impracticable.

"Supposing the Troops landed, it must be left to  
 "the Consideration of the Generals, whether they  
 "should not march with the proper Precautions di-  
 "rectly to *Rockefort*, to prevent any Succours being  
 "thrown into the Place; at the same Time that the  
 "Marines should be employed in making a good In-  
 "trenchment for the Security of the Stores to be  
 "landed from Time to Time, as well as of a Retreat  
 "in Case of Necessity.

"We are told, the Country in the Neighbour-  
 "hood is low and marshy; that Circumstance might  
 "be of great Advantage in this Undertaking, be-  
 "cause in that Case, Troops cannot march by *Over-  
 "tures dans la Campagne*, but must follow the Dikes  
 "or Cawseys, which may be easily defended by  
 "Coupoires or Redoubts.

"A safe and well secured Communication between  
 "the Camp and the Sea, from whence you are to  
 "receive your Supplies of all Kinds, is absolutely  
 "necessary; the whole depends upon it.

" But this being done, I should not be much in  
 " Pain for the Safety of the Troops; an inferior  
 " Number dares not approach you; and one superior  
 " will not be easily assembled, without your knowing  
 " of it; and at all Events you have secured a Retreat  
 " to the Ships.

" I would advise, to procure Guides upon the Spot,  
 " and paying them greatly; when faithful; there are  
 " Numbers of Protestants in that Province, that  
 " wish you well, and would be glad to go on board  
 " with you.

" As for a *Coup de Main*, it may perhaps succeed  
 " best at your coming up; as the Enemy may be in  
 " great Hurry, Surprise, and Consternation; at  
 " such an unexpected Visit, and not have had Time  
 " to make his Dispositions. But if that is not  
 " thought proper, it may succeed as well after the  
 " Place has been thoroughly reconnoitred, and you  
 " have fixt the Spots where you design to direct your  
 " greatest Efforts; and if the Enemy see any Prepa-  
 " rations for a regular Attack, they will less suspect  
 " a *Coup de Main*.

" *Bergen-op-zoom* was taken by a *Coup de Main*,  
 " after a long Siege.

" *St. Philip's* was taken by scaling Ladders and a  
 " *Coup de Main*, though the Garrison was 3000  
 " strong, after a Siege of 56 Days.

" The Necessity of dividing a small Garrison in a  
 " Place of such Circumference as *Roche fort*, may fa-  
 " cilitate the Success of a bold Attempt."

Upon reading that Part of Sir *John Mordaunt's*  
 Narrative, which relates to the Night of the 28th of  
*September*, in which Night it was proposed to have  
 landed, where one Reason assigned, why the Troops  
 were not accordingly landed, is " that it would be Day  
 " before the first Embarkation could get on Shore;"  
 a Kind of Contradiction was observed between that  
 and Rear-Admiral *Brodrick's* Letter to Sir *Edward*  
*Hawke* on that Subject, who writes, that " the Ge-  
 " nerals are come to a Resolution not to land To-  
 " night,

" night, but to wait till Day-light, when they can have a full View of the Ground where they are to land." And Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* was thereupon desired to inform the Board, whether that was the Fact he meant to write, or whether he had, through Hurry, expressed himself otherwise than he intended ?

Who said, that what was contained in the Letter he must abide by ; that he gave it to Sir *John Mordaunt* to read before he sent it, to see if what he had wrote was agreeable to his Intention ; at the same Time desiring Sir *John* would explain the Reasons fully, as the Blame would lye upon him, Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* ; and that Sir *John* returned him the Letter, without making any Objection thereto ; and answered him, that the Blame would not lye upon him, but that they (the General Officers of the Land Forces) would be answerable.

Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* added, that he believes Major General *Conway* likewise read the Letter.

Major General *Conway* said, that he did not read the Letter ; and particularly remembers, that from the Letter being so short, he advised Sir *John Mordaunt*, that it should in his Opinion have been much fuller, setting forth the Reasons particularly of not landing the Forces that Night.

Sir *John Mordaunt* admitted, that the Letter was shewn to him ; but in the Hurry he did not sufficiently attend to the Contents ; and at the same Time did Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* the Justice to say, all was ready on his Part, and that he shewed the greatest Readiness to assist and co-operate for the Good of the Service ; but that he was certainly mistaken in the Reason assigned for the not landing ; and in order now to convince the Rear-Admiral thereof, desired him to recollect, whether all the Arguments used did not turn upon its being necessary, or at least advisable, to land before Day-light ; which was thought scarcely possible, as the Wind then was.

Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* reply'd, that the Landing would have been attended with great Difficulty, but is pretty well assured, they would have been on Shore before Day-light, or near the Time of Day; but that both Wind and Tide would have been against them for the second Embarkation, which would have occasioned at least six Hours Distance between the first and second Landing; he is nevertheless satisfied there is no Mistake in his Letter, and must beg Leave to repeat the Words Sir *John* himself made use of, "that they must see the Ground they were to land on."

Major General *Conway*, in order to explain this, observed, that Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* must, as he imagines, have mistaken the Sense, in which those Words were used, as what he conceives to have been meant by them is, Sir *John Mordaunt's* Intention of having the Ground viewed in the Morning, in order to embark the Night following.

The following Questions were then proposed by his Grace the Duke of *Marlborough* to Sir *John Mordaunt*, desiring he would use his Discretion in answering them, and received the several Answers subscribed to each Question, *viz.*

Q. Was the Attack of the Fort on the Isle of *Aix* with a view to facilitate the Landing on the Continent?

A. When he first attended the Council in *London*, he understood it was; and is of Opinion, the Fort alone was of no Consequence, had it not been with that View.

Q. Was that Attack necessary to engage the Attention of the whole Fleet and Army?

A. In his Opinion it was, because he understood the taking that Fort, and Fort *Fouras*, was to be done by the Shipping, and then they might have gone on to *Rochefort*.

Q. Did he see any Number of Forces or Batteries on the Shore, so as to make the Assistance of the Ships

Ships necessary to cover the landing on the Continent ?

A. There were Forces and Cannon, but the Number he can't answer for, and they were at a Distance from the Shore at the Time the Isle of Aix was taken, and did not know, where there was a Place to land. The Captain of the *Viper* Sloop said, the Sand Hills where they were to land would have concealed any Number of Forces, and it was not natural to expect the Troops would shew themselves, till they knew where the Landing was intended.

Q. Did he send the Quartermaster General or any Land Officers, with Rear Admiral *Brodrick*, to reconnoitre the Landing Places ?

A. He thought that a Matter relating to the Sea, and he did not : And besides, they could only make the Soundings in the Night, and consequently his sending a Land Officer with them could have been of no Use.

Q. When the Admiral returned with his Report; if a Council of War was thought necessary, why was it delayed till next Day ?

A. It was proposed by Major General *Conway* to go that Afternoon to the Isle of Aix to reconnoitre from thence, whether they could find out any Place near or toward *Fouras*, and also to examine the Prisoners; and the Men of War laid at such a Distance from each other at that Time, that the Members of the Council could not, without some Difficulty, be convened.

Q. Did he go that Afternoon to the Isle of Aix ?

A. Yes.

Q. Does he think, that a Detachment of four or five hundred Men could have taken Fort *Fouras* by Land, whilst the rest were marching to *Rochefort* ?

A. He knew nothing, at that Time, of the Strength of Fort *Fouras* on the Land-side.

Q. Had he been in Possession of Fort *Fouras*, could they not have secured a Retreat by that very narrow Neck of Land, which runs out into the Sea, against a much

a much greater Number of Forces, that might have opposed them ?

*A.* For an Answer to this Question, he begs Leave to refer to Major-General *Conway*, who said that Way, with Vice Admiral *Knowles's* Division. — Major General *Conway's* Answer is, That the Part referred to, is not properly a Neck of Land, but a Sand, which is covered at High Water.

*Q.* (*To Sir John Mordaunt.*) Does he not think he could have secured a Retreat (independent of that supposed Neck of Land) if in Possession of Fort *Fenras*?

*A.* Doubtless it would have been of great Use for securing a Retreat.

*Q.* Were not the Accounts of *Rochefort* contradictory?

*A.* It is difficult to recollect all that might be said on the Subject, the Council of War shews there was a Contradiction.

*Q.* Did the Evidence of the *French* Prisoners taken at the Isle of *Aix* contradict, or confirm the Report of Lieut. Colonel *Clerk*?

*A.* Some contradicted, and some confirmed it; but he gave little or no Weight to what the *French* Prisoners said.

*Q.* Did the Evidence, that said there was a wet Ditch round the Town, affirm, that that Ditch remained wet at Low Water?

*A.* He refers to the Council of War, and thinks from the Sluices at both Ends, it is natural to suppose it must be so.

*Q.* Does he think it possible to judge of the Practicability of taking a Place by Assault without reconnoitring, since the Evidence was contradictory?

*A.* His Narrative, as he conceives, explains that very fully; and he begs leave to remark that two Witnesses saw the Place wet, and the other only says, that when he saw the Ditch, it did not appear to him capable of being flowed.

*Q.* Did

Q. Did he communicate his Instructions to the Council of War?

A. He laid them upon the Table.

Q. What was done on the 26th and 27th of September?

A. He refers to the Narrative.

Q. What Reasons induced him to consent to landing on the 28th, since it appeared so difficult on the 25th?

A. The Difficulty was the Retreat, and if they took *Fouras*, which it was in View to have done on the 28th, they had a Retreat.

Q. Why would he risque the Troops on an inconsiderable Object, when he did not think it advisable to risque them on that of so much more Importance, and particularly pointed out by his Instructions, viz. the Attack upon *Rockefort*?

A. He looked upon it, the great Risque was avoided by securing a Retreat in the taking of *Fouras*, and in the other Case (that of attempting *Rockefort* without such Retreat) he refers to the Quotation from Sir *John Ligawier's* Paper used in his Narrative.

Q. How came he to resolve on returning to *England* without holding another Council of War, seeing it had been unanimously agreed in a former Council to land?

A. He refers himself to his Narrative, and to Sir *Edward Hawke's* Letter to him, which was produced, viz.

*Ramillies, Basque Road, 29th Sept. 1757.*

SIR,

Should the General Officers of the Troops have no farther Military Operation to propose, considerable enough to authorize my detaining the Squadron under my Command longer here, I  
4 " beg



“ beg Leave to acquaint you, that I intend to proceed with it for *England* without Loss of Time.”

“ I am, Sir, your most Obedient

“ To                      “ Most Humble Servant,  
“ Sir John Mordaunt.

“ ED. HAWKE.”

Sir John Mordaunt having answered to the several Questions proposed to him, desired to observe in Addition to his Narrative, that the first Design was to have taken *l' Isle d'Aix* and Fort *Fouras* by Sea, and then there would have been great Ease in the rest of the Enterprize; that he imagined from the first setting out *l' Isle d'Aix* and Fort *Fouras* could be taken by Sea; and in the Evening of taking *l' Isle d'Aix*, Admiral Sir Edward Hawke mentioned, that he would take *Fouras* the next Morning, by laying a Ship to it. And the next Morning Sir Edward called for the Pilot of the *Magnanime*, and examined him, whether he could lay his Ship so as to dismount Fort *Fouras*? to which the Pilot answered, he could. The same Morning Major General Conway came on the *Ramilies*, and produced the Plan referred to in the Narrative.

Colonel James Wolfe, Quarter-Master General upon the Expedition, being called; at the Desire of Sir John Mordaunt, and desired to inform the Board what passed the Evening after taking the *Isle d'Aix*, in regard to the Attack of *Fouras*, — said, that he had been at the *Isle of Aix*, and returned about 8 o'Clock, and took the Liberty of suggesting his Opinion to Sir Edward Hawke and Sir John Mordaunt, that he did not doubt but a Ship of War might batter Fort *Fouras*, and that a Body of Troops might be landed at the same time, and attack it with Success: He took the Liberty also to mention, (as he only had seen the Fort) that if Sir Edward Hawke thought proper to make a Diversion near *Rochelle* at the same time, it might

might engage the Attention of the *French*, and give an Opportunity of making a Descent between: He also hinted his Opinion, as to sending the Bomb Ketches out, not knowing, but Bombs might be thrown into *Rochelle*; and Sir *Edward* sent for them up accordingly. He likewise mentioned another Circumstance, in regard to sending for the Pilot of the *Magnanime*, who would inform Sir *Edward*, if there was Depth of Water sufficient to carry a Ship up to *Fouras*; adding, from the indifferent Opinion he had of the Fort, a Forty or Fifty Gun Ship might at least annoy the Fort, so as to give an Opportunity of Landing. Sir *Edward* then seemed to incline to the Attack of *Fouras*, and mentioned the *Barfleur* as a Ship he intended to employ; talked of doing it the next Morning, and appeared very keen and warm about it; that Sir *Edward* did send for the Pilot of the *Magnanime*, and examined him the next Day, but he, Colonel *Wolfe*, was not present; that he spoke to the Pilot of the *Magnanime* himself the next Morning, (but whether before or after his being examined by Sir *Edward*, is not certain) and asked him, whether he could carry a Ship up to *Fouras*? The Pilot's Answer was, either he could (or he believed he could) take the *Magnanime* within half a Mile, as he understood, of *Fouras*; and if he recollects, said, he would beat it down in less Time, than he had done the other Fort. He asked the Pilot further, Whether between Fort *Fouras* and Fort *la Point* any Persons could be landed during the Attack to invest *Fouras*, and desired the Pilot to find a Guide amongst the Prisoners, to shew a proper Place for landing, venturing to tell him, they should be handsomely rewarded, if they performed the Service well. He also asked the Pilot, why he chose the *Magnanime*, rather than the *Barfleur*, or any other Ship? he answered, on account of the Captain, of whom his Expression was, "*Il est jeune & brave, Servez vous en.*"

Being asked by Sir *John Mordaunt*, whether he ever  
heard

heard any Sea Captain say, he would undertake the taking of the Fort ?

Answered, Captain *Colby* of the Princess *Amelia*; in Conversation on that Head, told him, he had made Offers to attack it, is not certain he said, he had made those Offers to Sir *Edward Hawke*, but frequently to Mr. *Brodrick*. He, Colonel *Wolfe*; likewise observed to Captain *Colby*, as it was then late, being the 28th September, if the Troops were pushed, there might possibly be a Necessity of attacking it, in order to bring off the Troops ; and said, in that Case he supposed, as an *Englishman* who wished well to his Country, he would urge the Admiral to do it ; and, he believes, he spoke to the same Purpose afterwards to Mr. *Brodrick* in the *America*.

Being asked, of what Strength did *Fouras* appear to him, when he first reconnoitred it ?

Answered, he saw it immediately after the Attack of the Isle of *Aix*, and it appeared to him to be a weak Fortress: The Front and Parapets were of Masonry, which, he conceives, must have been of Advantage, and consisted of a streight Line of a Wall, and another within that higher up, and no Outworks, (he speaks of the Side towards the Sea.) — He could not from his Eye discover the Land-side, nor get one Word of Intelligence concerning it at that Time. There were 24 Embrazures to the Sea side, and a Battery beyond, which Battery he did not see the first Day.

Being asked, (by Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire) what Number of good Troops would, in his Opinion, have enabled a Commander to prevent their landing at the proposed Landing-place at *Cbate-laillon* ?

Answered, Any Opinion he can form upon that Point must be very indeterminate; but, from what he could observe, the Sand Hills were pretty near to the Water-side, and his Notion is, all Circumstances considered, a Thousand good Foot, and 200 or 300 Horse, might have prevented about 2000 Men landing from Boats.

Being

Being asked by the Board, How many could have embarked in the Boats ?

Answered, He believes there was never an exact Calculation made of that; he should think about thirty-six Companies, which consisted of about sixty private Men each, besides Officers.

Q. Did he see any Troops, where it was proposed to land ?

A. No. He saw six Pieces of Cannon on the Point, but which he thinks could not reach the Beach.

Q. If a sufficient Number of Men had been concealed behind the Sand Hills, could Ships in that Case be of any Use to cover the Landing ?

A. No: Such Troops must have been safe from the Ships while concealed.

Colonel *George Howard*, being called at Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire, and asked, what Account the Captain of the *Viper* Sloop gave him ? said, that he received Sir *John Mordaunt's* Orders to go reconnoitring with Colonel *Wolfe* on *Thursday*, which he believes was the 29th of *September*; and when they came to the *Viper* Sloop, which was stationed nearest the Coast, as they were taking their View of the Land, he asked Captain *Skynner*, the Commander, some Questions relative to Observations he might have made. The Captain said, he came there on the *Sunday* before, and that on the *Sunday* Afternoon, or *Monday* Morning, he saw a considerable Number of Troops marching down, and that he reckoned eight or nine Pair of Colours; that he saw them in Camp; that the next Morning the View of the Camp was intercepted, so that he could not see them again, which he attributed to the Enemy having flung up some Ground on the Beach; and that he saw the Sand Hills on the Beach considerably higher than they were on *Sunday* when he came there; which he, Colonel *Howard*, reported to Sir *John Mordaunt*.

Being questioned by the Board, whether he asked  
the

the Captain of what particular Numbers he thought the Troops might consist?

Said, he did ask him that Question, and that the Captain answered him, he could not determine; but that he, Colonel *Howard*, might better judge from the Number of Colours.

Being questioned farther, he said, the Captain could give no Description of the Quantity of Ground they covered in their Camp, nor did he specify, whether they were regular Forces, or the Troops of the Country.

Captain *Thomas Osbert Mordaunt* being examined, at the Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*, said, that he received a Message from Sir *Edward Hawke* the Morning after the Attack upon the Isle of *Aix*, desiring him to come down to the Cabbin; where he found the Admiral, Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, and the Pilot of the *Magnanime*. The Admiral desired him, Captain *Mordaunt*, as he did not understand *French* himself, to ask the Pilot some Questions for him. After asking some about the Approach to *Rochelle*, he asked particularly, how near a Ship could be brought to *Fouras*; the Pilot said, he could bring the *Magnanime*, as his Expression was “*dans un demy Mile, meme dans un quart de Mile;*” but he must then run the Ship upon the soft Mud, in which she would stand secure till the next Tide, which would bring her off. And lest there should have been any Misunderstanding, as to the Distance intended by a Mile, the Pilot was desired to explain himself, and said he meant “*Miles of England.*” The Admiral replied, that would do. The Admiral then asked, if, by lightening the *Barfleur*, he could bring her as near; the Pilot said he could, but he had rather go with the *Magnanime*, because Captain *How* was young and brave; and that he could not be better employed than in the Service of his Country. The Admiral mentioned, he did not care that Ship should go, as having been upon severe Service before.

Major

Major General *Conway* being desired by Sir *John Mordaunt* to give an Account, as to the Time proposed for landing, whether it was intended to have been by Night, or by Day-light, and the Reasons of its being put off, said, that he understood it to have been the Intention of all (he knows it was his own) to have landed in the Night, and the Disposition was made to land accordingly. Captain *How* first came on Board the *Ramillies*, where they all were before they went to their Rendezvous; and said, he was sorry to observe to them, the Wind was sprung up from the Shore, and feared it would be a great Obstruction to landing that Night.—Sir *John Mordaunt* said, he would go to the Rendezvous on board the *America*, where they should be better Judges, and that he would make the Landing, if possible. When they came on board the *America*, Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* and several of the Captains said (believes Mr. *Brodrick* spoke first, but is not certain) they hoped it would not be imputed to any Backwardness in them, but it was their Opinion, the Wind sat so strong against them, it would be about Day-light before the Boats could get to Shore, and six Hours more, before a second Embarkation could be landed. Sir *John Mordaunt* said, as he remembers, the Disposition was made for landing in the Night, and that he thought it must be put off to another Night; and took the Opinion of the Officers present upon that Subject.

Major General *Cornwallis* confirmed the same in general; adding, that he rather understood from his Conversation with Captain *How*, that his Opinion was against landing in general, as he confesses his own was; but it was most indisputably the Intention, that the Troops should land in the Night. He remembers Captain *Dennis* particularly thought the landing, as the Wind then was, an impracticable, or at least, a very dangerous Enterprize.

Colonel *George Howard* confirmed the same, as to the Disposition being made for landing in the Night, and the Reason of its being deferred.

C

Colonel

Colonel *Thomas Brudenell* being desired by Sir *John Mordaunt* to give an Account of what passed within his Knowledge, as to the Difficulty of Landing, said, that by Sir *John Mordaunt's* Orders the Afternoon of the 28th, it appeared the Intention was to land before the Day came on. The Long-boat belonging to the Transport he, Colonel *Brudenell*, was aboard of, was a pretty large one, and there were embarked in it 40 or 42 Soldiers. They waited some Time along side the Ship, expecting the Signal to put off, and observing that the Wind blew very strong from the Shore, he asked the Master of the Transport, whether he thought it possible, that the Yawl with four Soldiers in it could tow that Long boat to Shore? who answered, he was satisfied it was impossible to do it in less than seven Hours, but he rather thought it was impossible to do it at all. He, Colonel *Brudenell*, had apprehended the Men of War's Boats were to have attended, and assisted in towing them; for having been on Board several Ships, it appeared to him an impossible Thing; this was about One in the Morning. Whilst they were waiting, an Officer of his Regiment, who had been on Board the Transport, whence the Grenadiers and Pickets were to go into the Boats, came on Board, and told him, Captain *Buckle* of the *Royal George* had been on Board that Transport, and observed to them, that as the Wind was, he thought it impracticable for the Boats to land, and that Captain *Buckle* was gone on board the Admiral to acquaint him therewith. In about an Hour and an half after that, another Boat came along side the Transport with a Sea Officer, as he believes, in it, who said, Captain *Buckle* was come back from the Admiral, and the Men were not to land that Night, but were to return to their Ships again. This he did not take for an Order, and so his Men remained in the Boat, where they had been some Hours, till he received Sir *John Mordaunt's* Orders to put them on Board again. He likewise asked several others next Day, what had passed on board their

Transports,

Transports, and found it to have been the general Opinion of the Masters, that it was not possible to land that Night.

Vice Admiral *Knowles* being asked, at Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire, whether several Winds might not have kept the Fleet a considerable Time in *Basque* Road, without a Possibility of getting out?

Answered, He has already given his Opinion in the first Council of War on this Head, to which he begs Leave to refer; for that the same Wind which would prevent the re-imbarking of the Troops, would detain the Squadron there.

Asked, Did he not think it advisable to fail on their Return Home at the Time they did, considering the Situation of the *French* Fleets, which might be expected home?

Answered, His Opinion never was asked about it.

Being desired by Sir *John Mordaunt* now to give his Opinion on that Question, said, That after he found there was no landing for the Troops, without great Risk, he should, had he been properly asked by his superior Officer, certainly have given his Opinion for coming away.

Sir *John Mordaunt* here begged Leave to observe, that he did apply for a Council of War to Sir *Edward Hawke*, who refused him, giving him for Answer, that the Seamen had nothing to do with it, it was a Land Operation only: He, Sir *John*, since finds, upon a closer Perusal of his Instructions, that he had himself a Power to have called a Council of War, but was not then apprised of it.

Major General *Conway* was then questioned by the Board, Whether Sir *John Mordaunt's* Instructions were laid before the Council of War?

Answered, Yes.

Q. What Reasons he had to apprehend a Body of Troops to oppose their Landing?

A. From general Reasoning upon the Subject, and the Information of the Prisoners.

Q. What was that Information?



A. One said, there were eleven Battalions, another mentioned seven ; and though he paid very little Regard to any of them singly, yet, upon the Whole, he thought there was no room left to doubt but there were some Troops.

Q. Whether any Batteries or Troops appeared to him ?

A. Very few : There was a small Battery, but he imagined the Troops would naturally conceal themselves till the Attempt to land.

He then observed, that no Officer, as he conceives, called to a Council of War, is criminally accountable for his Opinion given in that Council ; but if called upon, he is very ready to give the Reasons that guided his Opinion.

Being desired to mention those Reasons, he said, as well from general Reasoning as Intelligence, tho' he knew of no considerable Army in the Field, he was persuaded there must be a considerable Number of Men in *Rochefort*.—They had been seen five Days on the Coast, and two Days more must have been taken up in landing with the Stores.—They had no particular Intelligence of many necessary Circumstances relative to the State of the Place : They could not surprize it, and had not Artillery to attack it in form, and no secure Retreat for the Troops.—That he did imagine there would be an Opposition upon landing, but the Want of a Retreat was the principal Objection with him.—He further said, they had not at first sufficient Intelligence to depend on taking Fort *Fouras* by an Attack on the Land Side ; when he thought the Intelligence sufficient, he did propose landing in order to attack it. He then, to save the Trouble of any further Questions, said, that he had prepared a short State of the whole Proceedings, beginning from the first Attack upon *Aix*, so far as his own Conduct is any way concerned, which was laid before the Board, and read as follows, viz.

“ On *Friday* the 23d of *September*, I went up with  
 “ three Battalions to sustain the Attack on the Fort  
 “ of *Aix*. “ On

“ On Saturday Morning I went on board the *Ramilies* (Sir *Edward Hawke*'s Ship) and there gave in a Plan for landing as near *Fouras* as possible, and attacking the Fort de l'*Equille* near it with a Detachment of Grenadiers, while a Ship lay up to batter the Fort of *Fouras* by Sea ; and for making a Feint on the Side of *Rockelle* and the Isle of *Rhé*, to facilitate that Attempt. This Plan was accepted by Sir *John Mordaunt*, but not approved of by the Admiral.

“ Soon after the Rear Admiral and Captains, sent to reconnoitre and found the Coast, reporting, that there was no landing Place near *Fouras*, and that the only landing Places they had discovered between that Fort and *La Rockelle*, were near the Point of *Chatelaillon* ; and it being also now declared, that the Fort of *Fouras* could not be attacked by Sea, that Scheme was laid aside, and a general Council of War called, which met next Morning, the 25th ; wherein it was unanimously resolved, by both Sea and Land Officers present, that the landing near *Chatelaillon*, in order to march up and attack *Rockefort* directly, as the Question was there stated, was neither advisable nor practicable.

“ But a Question being then proposed for determining to come back to *England*, I opposed it, as it was not in that View I gave my Assent to the former Question ; and thought we should by all Means see, what farther could be done to annoy the Enemy.

“ We met next Day to sign the Council ; and Sir *John Mordaunt* then proposed landing on the Island of *Oleron*, and said, he had mentioned it to Sir *Edward Hawke*, who approved it. To this I added, that if that Place was fixt upon for a Landing, I should then propose attacking the Castle of *Oleron* on the South End of the Island, and passing over from thence to the Continent, between *Brouage* and the *Charente*, which is about a League,

“ and from thence not more than two Leagues to  
 “ *Rochefort*: And as no Attempt was probably ex-  
 “ pected on that Side, we might possibly succeed, so  
 “ far as to destroy some of the Ships or Magazines.  
 “ But this Scheme being laid aside after some Debate,  
 “ I then proposed to the General Officers present, to  
 “ go and view *Fouras*, and the Coast near it, to see  
 “ what could be done on that Side, which was agreed  
 “ to.

“ They met accordingly at the Isle of *Aix*, where  
 “ I gave my Opinion for the Landing and Attack of  
 “ that Fort, and the Fort *de l'Equille*; but that At-  
 “ tempt being in general judged too difficult, it was  
 “ dropt.

“ The same Afternoon I went on board the *Ra-*  
 “ *milies*, and proposed to Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir  
 “ *John Mordaunt* the landing at *Chatelaillon*, and  
 “ marching from thence to attack *Fouras* and the  
 “ other Forts on the Back; of which I thought we  
 “ had now sufficient Knowledge to depend upon the  
 “ taking *Fouras*, as a secure Retreat for the Troops,  
 “ and that we might then see, what farther could be  
 “ done.

“ This Proposition was next Morning referred to  
 “ a Council of War, where it was agreed upon, and  
 “ ordered to be put in execution that Night.

“ But was put off, on a Representation of the Sea  
 “ Officers, upon account of the strong Wind then  
 “ blowing from the Shore.

“ It was also at the same Time reported, that  
 “ some Camps and Entrenchments had been seen on  
 “ the Shore, particularly near the Place where the  
 “ Landing was to have been made.

“ I therefore asked Sir *John Mordaunt's* Leave to  
 “ go, and accordingly went next Morning to recon-  
 “ noitre the Coast from *Fouras* to *Chatelaillon*.

“ On my Report, Sir *John Mordaunt* called the  
 “ Land Officers of the Council of War together, to  
 “ know their Opinions, whether it was now proper to  
 “ renew the Attempt for the Landing.—I did de-

“ clare

“ clare it to be mine, but the other Gentlemen being  
 “ all of a contrary Opinion, I acquiesced.”

Major General *Conway* being asked, by desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*, Whether he, Sir *John*, did shew him Sir *Edward Hawke*’s Letter of the 29th of *September*, with regard to the Return to *England*?

Answered, That Sir *John* did shew him that Letter, and at the same Time offered Major General *Conway* (if it was his Opinion) still to go on; but he replied, it was too delicate a Matter for him to take upon himself, unless it was also Sir *John*’s own Opinion; that whatever might be his private Sentiments, he should acquiesce in the general Opinion, which he did accordingly.

Major General *Cornwallis* being called upon said, As he did not imagine his Conduct was under inquiry, he is not prepared with a Narrative. That he was a Major General, and the Third in Command in the Expedition, and, as he conceives, not responsible for the Failure or Success. That he was never wanting in any Part of his Duty, was always at his Post, and ready to obey any Order from his superior Officers: That he attended Councils of War when summoned, as was his Duty; and when there, gave his Opinion according to the best of his Judgment, and does not conceive himself to be accountable for the Opinion so given: But to any Questions the Board should think fit to propose, he would very readily give an Answer to the best of his Judgment.

Being asked, Whether he did at any Time, in his Opinion, see it practicable or advisable to land?

Answered, At no Time, as there appeared to him no Security for landing the Troops, nor any Retreat secured; and lastly, he had heard an able Pilot say, he had been seven Weeks there, without a Possibility of a Boat passing or repassing. The Retreat and Communication between the Troops and Shipping, appeared to him absolutely necessary; and their having been there so long, was a stronger Argument with him against landing. And informed, as he now is,

under all the Disadvantage of popular Opinion, were the Case again to happen under the same Circumstances, he should now persist in the same Opinion. He would as readily, as any Officer in the Service, have hazarded his own Person, if ordered to land with an Hundred Men only ; but when called upon for his Opinion in so momentous an Affair, he could not answer to himself risking the Whole. He added, he was against the Measure of landing in the Second Council of War, but acquiesced in the Opinion of the Majority of the Council, and was ready at his Post, to put the Resolution in Execution.

Being asked, whether any Thing appeared to him to prevent the Communication between the Ships and the Troops ?

Answered, no Men of War could get nearer than two Miles, which made the whole of the Communication precarious, as it depended only on the Wind's shifting into a particular Corner at the critical Juncture of the Equinox.

Colonel *George Howard*, as having been called to the Councils of War, by the Commanders of the Expedition, was then desired to lay before the Board, if he thought proper, the Motives which had the principal Weight with him, together with any other Matters, that he might judge material for the Information of the Board ; who said, he was very little prepared, not knowing he should be called upon, but nevertheless readily mentioned to the Board the principal Matters, which had determined his Judgment, being to the same Effect, as contained in the Paper by him presented the Day following.

*Adjourned till the Morrow at 11 o'Clock in the Forenoon.*

At a meeting of the said General Officers, appointed to inquire into the Causes of the Failure of the late Expedition, &c. pursuant to Adjournment on *Tuesday* the 15th of *November* 1757.

Major

Major General *Cornwallis*, desired to add, in Explanation of what he mentioned Yesterday, with regard to the Pilot's Evidence upon the Impossibility of passing, and repassing, that he does not thereby mean any particular Storm or Tempest; but that the ordinary Wind fitting in from the Bay, would make such a Surf on the Shore, that Boats could not go there.

Colonel *Howard* acquainted the Board, that he had now committed to writing the Motives of his Opinion, differing in little more from the Account he gave them Yesterday, than that they are more methodically digested, and desired they might be accepted instead of his verbal Narration; and the same were accepted accordingly, and read, as follows, *viz.*

“ Unaccused and untonscious, as I am, of the least military Misconduct, I shall however, for the Satisfaction of this Honourable Board, relate the Motives, which induced the Opinions I have given, not as a Matter of Self-defence, but of Evidence only, agreeable to the Summons I received to attend at this Place.

“ As it is well known I went upon the Expedition, only as a Regimental Officer, and that my Situation could neither intitle me to know the Motives upon which it was undertaken, nor the Springs which were to conduct the Execution of it, I flatter myself I cannot be in the least accountable for the Failure of the Enterprize.

“ As the Execution of this Affair was intrusted to three General Officers of such established Characters; I little thought I should be concerned, but in a chearful Obedience of the Orders I might receive from them.

“ When I was summoned as eldest Colonel to the Council of War on the 25th of *September*, I was totally uninformed, as my Situation could not admit of my being present at any previous Consultation.

“ When

“ When the Object of the Council was proposed,  
 “ and the Rear Admiral’s Report of the 24th relative  
 “ to the Soundings and two landing Places,  
 “ which he had discovered, was read, the great Diffi-  
 “ culties, which attended the landing of the Troops,  
 “ Artillery, Ammunition, Provisions, and Camp  
 “ Equipage at either of those Places, as well as the  
 “ great Uncertainty of securing a Retreat from thence  
 “ in case of any Emergency, and of preserving a  
 “ Communication with our Shipping, were so fully  
 “ demonstrated, (as no Ship, not even a Frigate of  
 “ the Fleet, could afford the least Protection, either  
 “ in the landing or reembarking of the Troops) that  
 “ I thought the Attempt uncommonly hazardous, and  
 “ that they were by no Means the proper Places of  
 “ landing, to facilitate the Designs upon *Rockefort*.

“ In Consequence of which Opinion, I asked at  
 “ the Council of War, If it was not possible for a  
 “ Ship or two to favour a Descent of the Troops  
 “ near *Fouras*, by attacking that Fort by Sea; which  
 “ I thought should have been the immediate Opera-  
 “ tion, after taking the Fort of *Aix*; as by that  
 “ Means we should have been three Miles at least  
 “ nearer to *Rockefort*, the Troops, &c. could have  
 “ been landed in a very short Space of Time, and  
 “ nothing could have interrupted our Communica-  
 “ tion with the Ships: But the Admiral declared it  
 “ was impracticable, and that no Ship could go up  
 “ higher than the Isle of *Aix* without being on  
 “ Ground.

“ The other Part of my Opinion was founded upon  
 “ the Evidence mentioned in the Council of War,  
 “ being (as I have observed before) quite uninformed,  
 “ and not knowing any thing about *Rockefort*, but  
 “ from the Evidence which appeared at the Council!

“ As to the second Council of War on the 28th,  
 “ tho’ I do not think any great publick Utility would  
 “ have been answered in landing the Troops for the  
 “ Purposes therein mentioned; and tho’ the Pro-  
 “ posal was made late in point of Time, yet I was  
 “ deter-

“ determined no Negative of mine should appear to  
 “ any Operation it was thought proper to undertake  
 “ by so many better Judges than myself.

“ I have ever been most ready to exert myself in  
 “ all Points of my Duty, shall constantly persevere  
 “ in so doing, and defy the World to lay a contrary  
 “ Behaviour to my Charge.”

Captain *William Phillips* delivered to the Board a Paper from Sir *John Ligonier*, which he was directed to inform them is the Original, of which Sir *John Mordaunt* produced a Copy, and referred to in his Narrative; and which Sir *John Ligonier* is desirous the Board should understand, was by no Means intended as Instructions, but only Hints, which he had put upon Paper and read to Sir *John Mordaunt*, who thereupon desired a Copy. Captain *Phillips* likewise observed, That there is a Paragraph added at the Foot of this Paper, which is not contained in Sir *John Mordaunt's* Copy, and which Sir *John Ligonier* had directed him likewise to mention to the Board : The said Paragraph is, as follows, *viz.*

“ When Sir *John Ligonier* wrote this Paper, of  
 “ which Sir *John Mordaunt* desired a Copy, he knew  
 “ nothing of the Disposition of the *French* Troops.  
 “ —The small Number of those Troops that could  
 “ be upon that Coast, by the Disposition produced  
 “ at the Cabinet Council, lessened very much the  
 “ Necessity of the Precautions to be taken for a Com-  
 “ munication or landing.”

Sir *John Mordaunt* here observed, That those Hints proceeded from his pressing Sir *John Ligonier* to give him a positive Order; which, he said, he could not do, but would give him his Thoughts.

Major General *Conway* confirms the Circumstance of Sir *John Mordaunt* pressing Sir *John Ligonier*, in his Presence, and expressing a great Desire, in so particular a Case, to have a positive Order.

Vice Admiral *Knowles* being questioned by the Board, Whether he knew of any Proposal having  
 been



been made for attacking Fort *Fouras* by Sea at any Council of War, or Meeting?

Answered; He cannot particularly charge his Memory, but knows very well Sir *Edward Hawke* asked his Opinion about it, and said, The Pilot of the *Magnanime* had told him, that a Ship could go within a small Distance to batter it; and Sir *Edward Hawke* directed his Secretary to begin an Order directed to him, Vice Admiral *Knowles*, for the *Barfleur*'s being lightened for that Service; the *Barfleur* drawing near two Feet less Water than the *Magnanime*.

When he returned on board his own Ship, he sent for Captain *Graves*, who commanded the *Barfleur*, to acquaint him with the Order Sir *Edward Hawke* had given him: Captain *Graves* answered him, That the Ship was on Ground where she laid, and he might look at her, for the Water had ebbed away a Foot from her; and she then laid between four and five Miles distant from the Shore; he acquainted Sir *Edward Hawke* with this, who suppressed the Order; but directed him to try to carry the Bomb-ketches in. He did so, and one of them which drew but eleven Feet Water ran a-ground at a greater Distance from *Fouras* than the Bombardier could throw the Shells with the greatest Requisite of Powder; the Flight of which he knows, at an Elevation of forty-five Degrees, will go two Miles and two Thirds; the Bombardier threw several Shells; whilst the Bomb-ketch laid ashore, two large Row-Boats with two Pieces of heavy Cannon in their Prows, attacked the Ketch, (full of Men each) upon which he (the Vice Admiral) made a Signal immediately for all the Boats in the Fleet, manned and armed, to go to the Ketch's Assistance; and went himself on board the *Coventry* Frigate to drive away the Row-Boats, which Frigate ran a-ground five Times considerably within the Space of an Hour, and at greater Distance from the Shore than the Bomb-ketch. He then sent his Master on sounding; and by the Bearings of the several Places  
at

at which he took his Soundings, it appeared there were but six Feet Water at high Water, two Miles off the Fort.—He added, that he will venture to say, even if Frigates could have got to it, the Fort would have been attacked by Sea.

Being asked, What kind of Landing there was at *Chatelaillon Bay* for Boats?

Answered, He was not there, but refers to Rear Admiral *Brodrick*.

Asked, at the Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*, What Day the Experiment was made against *Fouras*?

Answered, He is not certain of the particular Day; it was two or three Days after taking the Isle of *Aix*, if not four.

Rear Admiral *Brodrick*, being questioned by the Board, Whether he knows of any Proposal being made for attacking Fort *Fouras* by Sea?

Answered, He never heard it proposed; he was on a different Service.

Q. Whether he heard any Captain offer to undertake it?

A. He thinks he did in private Conversation hear a Captain say, he would undertake it, but no such Proposal was ever made to him, as Admiral.

Q. What kind of landing there was for Boats at *Chatelaillon Bay*?

A. It is a very fair, firm, sandy Bay; a Bay where, in his Opinion, he could get out of the Boat without wetting his Shoes.

Q. How near to the Shore could the Men of War come?

A. By the Soundings he had, not nearer than two Miles.

Q. Did he observe either Troops, or Batteries, to obstruct the landing, had it been attempted, soon after his Return from the Soundings?

A. He saw some Troops, when sounding, about 400 or 500 Foot, and 150 Horse, to the best of his Judgment.—As to Batteries, he had several Shot fired at him whilst he was sounding; but at the Place where

where the Troops were to land, no Shot could have reached the Boats.

Q. What did he observe as to the Nature of the Country near the Shore?

Q. There were Sand-Hills the greatest Extent of the Bay, about forty Yards from the high Water Mark.

Q. (At Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire) Could not Bombs have reached the Troops behind the Sand-Hills?

A. He believes the Bomb-Ketches could have been of Service to annoy the Troops, if they could have come near.

Q. Might not several Winds have detained the Fleet in *Basque* Road?

A. He refers to the Council of War, (in like Manner with Vice Admiral *Knowles*) saying, That the same Wind, which would have prevented the Troops from reimbarking, would have detained the Squadron there.

Q. As the Works of *Aix* were demolished, the Wind was then fair, and the Fleet wanted at Home, was it not, in his Opinion, advisable to sail on the Return to *England*?

A. His Opinion was never asked; but had he been called upon, he should certainly have been of Opinion for the Fleet to have sailed, upon a Supposition of no Land Operation being to be undertaken.

Sir *John Mordaunt* was here referred to, at the Desire of Major General *Conway*, lest any Doubt should be entertained of his Proposal having been given in, who said, the Proposal was delivered in, as mentioned in Major General *Conway's* Narrative.

Colonel *James Wolfe* was questioned by the Board, What is his Opinion of the Practicability of landing Troops between *Rochelle* and Fort *Fouras*?

A. He saw the Bays upon the 29th *September*, and has a Minute of the Report he made, which he laid before the Board.—His Opinion is, It was very practicable in the great Bay of *Chatelaillon*; the lesser Bay  
he

he did not see much of. — The Minute by him delivered being read, was to the following Effect; That  
 ‘ he was sent with Colonel *Howard* and Lieutenant  
 ‘ Colonel *Murray* by Sir *John Mordaunt*, the 29th,  
 ‘ to view the Bay of *Cbatellaillon*, and their Report,  
 ‘ as far as he can recollect, was to this Purpose,  
 “ That they did not see any Batteries, Redoubts, En-  
 “ trenchments, or Troops, to prevent their landing  
 “ in the great Bay; but that the Sand-Hills were  
 “ high enough to conceal the Motions of an Enemy.  
 “ They were informed by the Captain of the *Viper*,  
 “ whose Ship anchored nearest the Shore, that a  
 “ Number of Men had been seen working in the  
 “ Sand-Hills for some Days. There were six Pieces  
 “ of Cannon upon the Point of *Cbatellaillon*, and  
 “ small Guards and Posts along the Shore of the  
 “ lesser Bay.”

Q. Could the Boats have gone out of the Reach of the six Pieces of Cannon?

A. Yes.

Q. Had he been ordered to attempt landing at any Time with all the Men the Boats would have contained, did any such Difficulties appear to him, as would have justified him in representing against it as rash, or impracticable?

A. Had he been ordered to do it, he should not have represented against it. He observes, he did not see the Bay till the 29th.

Q. Did he ever propose to go out reconnoitring before that Time?

A. He can't particularly recollect: He looked upon it to be more immediately the Duty of his Office, as Quarter-Master-General, and was ready to go, whenever ordered.

Q. Does he know any Thing relative to Fort *Fouras* on the Land-side?

A. Only from viewing it through Glasses from the Isle of *Aix*.

Q. How far is it, as he apprehends, from the great Bay of *Cbatellaillon* by Land to Fort *Fouras*?

A. He

*A.* He can't well say, he never was within the Bay ; it may possibly be seven or eight Miles, but the guess is quite vague.

*Q.* How far from the Landing-place to *Rochefort* ?

*A.* He knows nothing of it, but has been told it is about twelve Miles from the great Bay ; about four Leagues.

*Q.* During the march from the Landing-place to *Rochefort*, might a Detachment sent to *Fouras* of 400 or 500 Men in his Opinion have taken it ?

*A.* He don't know the Strength of *Fouras* sufficiently to answer that Question.

*Q.* If the Troops had been in Possession of Fort *Fouras*, would not a Retreat have been secured ?

*A.* He supposes it might, but can't speak with any Certainty, or Precision.

*Q.* What does he take to have been the Strength of *Rochefort* from the best Intelligence he could get ?

*A.* He knows nothing of *Rochefort* ; nor did he get any Intelligence concerning it.

*Q.* (At Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire) Whether he heard Major *Desbrisay* speak of any Troops marching down, which he imagined were coming from the Isle of *Rhé* ?

*A.* Yes, on the 24th in the Morning Major *Desbrisay* came on board the *Ramilles*, and addressing himself to him, (Colonel *Wolfe*) asked him, whether he should make a Report of what he had seen, viz. a Body of Troops marching towards the Shore from that Part of the Continent opposite to the Isle of *Rhé* ; he said, he had also seen a Vessel go backwards and forwards, which he supposed had carried the Troops over, but did not mention the Numbers. He thereupon advised Major *Desbrisay* to go down and make his Report to Sir *John*, in the hearing of the Admiral.

Colonel *Howard* was asked, by desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*, whether he (Sir *John*) did not desire him, as soon as ever the Isle of *Aix* was taken, to pick up

up all the Intelligence he could from the Prisoners?

A. Yes, in Consequence of which he spoke to several, particularly to some of the *French* Officers; but no satisfactory Answer was got from them. He knows likewise some were spoke to by Major-General *Conway*, and some were sent for on the *Saturday* to be examined on board the Fleet.

Major-General *Conway* said, he did speak to several.

Captain *Patrick Tonyn* being asked, at Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire, what Orders Sir *John* gave him the Morning before the Council of War of the 25th on board the *Neptune*?

Answered, That Sir *John* came to him on the Quarter-Deck, and told him, some Prisoners were to come on board, and if there were any Soldiers, Sergeants, or Corporals, among them, directed him to collect what Intelligence he could by Bribes, offering them forty, fifty, or Sixty Guineas. The Prisoners came on board, but were most of them Labourers and Masons.—He questioned several of them, but they could give him no Intelligence, as they were pressed from a distant Part of the Country. There was a Soldier, or two, of the Regiment of *Poisson* amongst them, Militia, but they could give him no Information.—This he reported to Sir *John*.

Lieutenant-Colonel *Robert Clerk*, chief Engineer upon the Expedition, was questioned by the Board, whether he had ever been at *Rockefort*?

A. Yes, in *April* 1754.

Q. Had he then an Opportunity of making any Remarks on the Strength and Situation of it?

A. Yes, his Letter to Sir *John Ligonier* particularly describes it, to which he refers,—(being of the Number of Papers transmitted by Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, and which were read at the Outset of the Inquiry.)

Q. Is *Rockefort* situated on a Flat, an Eminence, or a Declivity?

D

A. That

*A.* That Part next the River is flat and low, but it rises on the Side next the Land.

*Q.* Is the Ditch round *Rochefort* level with the River at High-Water Mark, or is any of it higher than the River?

*A.* A great Part is higher than the Tide can flow to.

*Q.* If any Part of the Fosse is higher than the River, can that Part be filled with Water?

*A.* It cannot.

Being desired to give a Description of the Strength and Situation of *Rochefort*; he referred again to his said Letter to Sir *John Ligonier*, which was read to him.

He desired to make one Observation (in Regard to an Opinion which had prevailed, that his being permitted by the Governor to see *Rochefort* was in friendship, or particular favour to him) that he was intirely unacquainted with Mr. *Macnamara*, who was the Governor at that Time; and believes, he would have shewn the same Indulgence and Civility in every Respect to any Officer in Regimentals.

*Q.* Whether he has received any Information since to induce him to believe *Rochefort* was stronger at the Time of this Expedition, than when he was there?

*A.* No, he has several Reasons, which induce him to believe, it was in the same Condition when they came into the Bay.

Being desired to mention those Reasons, he said, that the Day after the Council of War of the 25th, hearing there had been some Difficulties, he went to pass a Day with some of the principal *French* Officers in the Fort in the Isle of *Aix*. There were present the Engineer, the commanding Officer of the Marines, and the Commander of the Troops, with two or three other Officers of the Regiments. At first he examined two or three of them in regard to the Condition of some of the Places upon the Coast, and particularly *Rochefort*. He got at first no satisfactory Answers; upon which he resolved to pass the whole

whole Day with them. After Dinner he mentioned to the Company, that two or three of them had been very cautious of giving any Account of their Places, which he believed he knew as well as themselves : Upon which he took out his Pencil, and drew a Sketch of *Rochelle*, describing particularly its weak Sides, and then entered upon a particular Description of *Rochefort*. He then took the Engineer along with him to walk round the Fort, and desired him to tell him, if the Place (meaning *Rochefort*) was not as he described it, telling him besides, that there had been a Dispute between him and one of his Friends, who had it, by hearsay only, (that the Water could be thrown round the Town ; he said, that it was impossible upon account of the Inequality of the Ground, and that he (Lieut. Col. Clerk) gave a more particular Description of *Rochefort*, than he could do himself, though he had been often there ; but he had not examined it with great Attention, having always looked upon it as an open Place.---On the 30th at Night he went to the Isle of *Aix* with Colonel *Wolfe* on purpose to endeavour to make the Engineer say the same thing before him, as he had only mentioned it afore in private ; he brought him to Colonel *Wolfe*, and asked, whether, or nor, the Ditch could be made wet and Water thrown round the Town ? his Answer was, that it could not be upon Account of the Unevenness of the Ground ;---his precise Words in *French* were, “ *Ce ne scauroit être, a cause de l'inegalité du Terrain.*”

Another Circumstance is, that on the 28th of September, 1757, after the Council of War had come to a Resolution to land, he was on board the *Ramilles*, when Captain *Hamilton*, Aid de Camp to Major-General *Conway*, told him, there was a Fisherman, a very sensible Man in his Opinion for a common Man, who had been at *Rochefort* the 21st, and had been since taken Prisoner, and examined by Major-General *Conway*. He got Captain *Hamilton* to shew the Fisherman to him immediately, and asked him a great many



many Questions in regard to the Place ; who seemed to be very distinct in regard to many particular Circumstances ; for so common a Man, much more than he could have imagined ; he mentioned particularly that he went by *Rocheport* on the 21<sup>st</sup> of the Month, and that the Place which he Lieutenant-Col. *Clerk* had described to him as open and unfortified, was in the same Condition that Day. He asked him the Question several Times before many People, and particularly before Colonel *Wolfe* :--He had never seen the Man before.

A third Circumstance is, that upon the Voyage home on board the *Royal George*, where were some *French* Prisoners, he found among them a Mason, who had been employed at *Rocheport* about two Years, and enquired of him, if any of the Gates were upon a Level with the Ground, without any Bridge : He said, there was one, but that it had a very good strong Gate. The Reason of his asking that Question, was, that if Water could be thrown round the Town, there must have been a Bridge in his Opinion. This passed before Captain *Buckle* of the *Royal George*.

Since his Return to *London*, he has seen several People, who have been at *Rocheport*, and particularly Mr. *Plenderleith*, a Merchant, who was at *Rocheport* about 14 Months ago ; and he confirmed him in this Particular of the Inequality of the Ground, and in every other Respect regarding the Place. This Mr. *Plenderleith* lived, for many Years, a Merchant at *Rochelle*, and he, Lieutenant-Colonel *Clerk*, knew him when he was there.

Major-General *Conway* said, that he examined several Persons, twenty at least, and therefore cannot particularly recollect, whether the Fisherman mentioned in Lieutenant-Colonel *Clerk*'s Evidence was one ; but if the Name was mentioned, he should perhaps remember,---and Lieutenant-Colonel *Clerk* thereupon mentioning, that he believes *Boncau* was the Name, Major-General *Conway* referred to a Minute, which

which he took of one *Boneau* of *L'Isle Dieu*, which is as follows :

“ *Boneau de L'Isle Dieu* was at *Rochefort* on *Wednesday*; does not know what Number the Garrison : believes great Part came out to the Coast and Batteries, since we came.---Town not very strong he thinks, but a good Rampart, and a *Ditch full of Water all round*.---That he saw it so.

“ 11 Battalions at *Rochelle*—More on the Isle of *Rbé*, several at *Oleron*--Saw seven at *Rochelle* eight Days ago—Water over against *Fouras* at half Cannon-shot four Fathom—Many Batteries on the Coast—Some Sand, but most muddy—Isle de *Rbé* good landing—Sand at Flat near the Shore.”

Major-General *Conway* added, if this was the same Man (which he could not pretend to affirm) the Man was sometimes clear, and sometimes very indistinct.

Lieutenant-Colonel *Clerk* said, the Man gave him an indistinct Account about the Ditch; and believes it to be the same Man.

Captain *William Hamilton* being called upon, at the Desire of Lieutenant-Colonel *Clerk*, said, he heard Lieutenant-Colonel *Clerk* ask the Man many Questions, and amongst others particularly as to the Side next the River, whose Answer was, Every Thing remained in the same Situation as before, and open.

Sir *John Mordaunt* observed, that *Boneau*, (if it is the same) was examined almost a whole Day before the Council, and he was so very indistinct and unsatisfactory, that the Council was quite out of Patience with him.

Lieutenant-Colonel *Clerk* desired leave to remark, that though one cannot expect to have any distinct or satisfactory Account from a Fisherman, or any common Man, in regard to a Fortification, and that one must even look for Contradictions in some Things, yet one may depend for a particular Circumstance upon a Man of that Kind, very nigh as much as upon an Engineer.

Being asked, by desire of Major-General *Cornwallis*, when he had collected what passed, whether he acquainted the Commander in Chief of the *English* Forces with that Conversation?

Answered; He did acquaint Sir *John Mordaunt* with it the next Day in the Morning (being the 27th, the Day before the Order for Landing) and Major General *Conway* likewise, when they were walking at the Top of the Donjon over the Gateway in the Isle of *Aix*, and mentioned particularly, that he had passed the Day with the People of the Fort, and particularly with the Engineer, on Purpose to examine him with regard to *Rockefort*; and that he had confirmed every Thing he, Lieut. Colonel *Clerk*, had said: And remembers particularly Sir *John Mordaunt's* Answer, That no Credit could be given to what a *French* Engineer said on that Subject; and asked, if he was in that Situation, whether he would have explained any thing on such a Subject? His Answer to Sir *John Mordaunt* was, "Different Men had different Characters; for his Part he believed him."

Sir *John Mordaunt* said, he remembers Lieut. Col. *Clerk's* acquainting him with this Circumstance of the Engineer, and his making that Observation upon it.

Major General *Conway* desired, it might be observed, that his two Proposals came on that very Day, and the Council was called that Night, which came to the Resolution of Landing. He added, that he tried the Engineer, but without getting any thing from him.

Sir *John Mordaunt* said, that if he understood Lieut. *Nethercote* rightly yesterday, the Engineer told him quite the reverse; — and Lieut. *Nethercote*, of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, being thereupon questioned, said, That he did speak with the Engineer at the Isle of *Aix*, but had no particular Conversation with him about the Ditch at *Rockefort*, or the Place; but the Engineer gave him prevaricating Answers, and he did not chuse to proceed with him.

Lieut.

Lieut. Colonel *Clerk* being asked, at Major General *Conway's* Desire, Whether he offered, or hinted at any Consideration to the Engineer?

Answered, No, never any; he industriously avoided that; but explained, that in Discourse he entered into their Affairs, thinking thereby to make them more free and open; and finding the Engineer, and one or two others, were likely to be ruined, unless they were soon released, he promised to use his Influence to get them released, as soon as they came to *England*.

Q. Did the Engineer give any other material Information about Troops, or otherwise?

A. No; he once threw it out to them, but he found, they shunned it.

Q. Did he ask the Engineer concerning the Troops after the Information given him in regard to *Rockefort*?

A. What he asked as to the State of their Troops was, to the best of his Knowledge, after the Information given him in regard to *Rockefort*; but the Engineer shunned giving an Answer, upon which he dropped it.

Being asked by the Board, whether he knows any thing of the Strength of Fort *Fouras* towards the Land?

Answered, It appears by his Letter, he never had seen the Fort; and at the Council of War he told them, he had then never seen the Land-side of it.

Q. Did he see any Obstruction to landing the Troops in the Bay of *Chatelaillon*?

A. None; when he reconnoitred with Major General *Conway* on the 29th; for he does not reckon the Cannon *en barbette* upon the high Bluff Point of *Chatelaillon* any Obstruction at all, as the Captains of the Men of War had remarked in their Report of the 24th.

Q. (By Desire of Major General *Conway*.) Did he hear him make his Report to Sir *John Mordaunt*?

A. He heard a good deal of it; he thinks not the

the whole, but believes it to have been conformable to what he has now said.

Q. Does he remember the Fort, or Cannon, upon the high Ground, on the other Side of the Fort *Fouras*?

A. He did not observe it himself; he knows Major General *Conway* mentioned it.

Q. (*From the Board.*) If Fort *Fouras* could not be taken, what Method would he have taken to secure a Retreat?

A. By making an Intrenchment at *Chatellaillon* to secure the two new Battallions, which he understood were to have been left there.

Sir *John Mordaunt*, after remarking that the two Battallions consisted intirely of new-raised, raw and undisciplined Men, desired Lieut. Colonel *Cle* might be asked, If an able Engineer had been at *Rochefort*, with a sufficient Number of Men and Tools how long would he have been in making the Opening spoken of equally secure against a *Coup de Main* with the rest of the Works?

To which he answered, That it is very difficult to ascertain any thing of that Kind with Precision, and that no Conclusion can be drawn from what may be done; for what may be done, very seldom is done--even in *France*.

Q. (*At the Desire of Major General Conway.*) What Time it would take to throw up an Intrenchment or a strong Profil in that yielding Sort of Ground, such as he threw up in the Isle of *Wight*, with as many Hands, as could be employed?

A. Though this depends very much upon the Nature of the Ground, so that sometimes a particular Spot takes double the Time of what a most able Engineer could determine at first (the particular Calculation of the Lines thrown up at the Island at the Entrance of *Portsmouth*, by Captain *Deméré*, having taken him five Times more Time than he expected) as for the Intrenchment thrown up in the Isle of *Wight*, he believes it may be thrown up in a Day and half, or perhaps

perhaps even in a Day, with as many Hands as could be employed upon it.

Q. Does he not think that Ditches and the morass Ground would be an additional Strength at the Opening of *Rockefort*?

A. To be sure they would.

Q. Were there not Ditches already cut, that would be an Impediment?

A. Yes.

Q. Does he not think Moon-light Nights would be a great Impediment to an Assault?

A. Believes the Moonlight could be no such Impediment, as to hinder the Place from being carried in a couple of Hours.

Q. (*From the Board*) If, contrary to his Expectations, *Rockefort* had been too strong to have been taken by a *Coup de Main*, could not the Store-houses and Magazines have been burnt by throwing of Carcasses and red hot Balls?

A. Undoubtedly, by Carcasses and Shells one might destroy a great many of the Stores; but to do it in any tolerable degree, would require five times the Number of what they had with them; and that such a Method would both take up Time, and there would likewise be great difficulty in bringing up sufficient Stores for that Purpose to the Place.

Major General *Conway* desired leave to produce a Minute of an Examination of a *French* Prisoner taken before Sir *John Mordaunt*, which was read, *viz.*

“ *Pierre Girard de Rockefort*, Sailor, who says, “ they have worked at *Rockefort* this Fortnight past; “ that he has seen new Works; that they had worked at the Ditch and at *Souterrains*.”

At Sir *John Mordaunt*'s Desire, who said he had lately received Information of a Letter found in the Isle of *Aix*, the Postscript whereof he conceived material, as it shews Precautions were taken at *Rockefort*, Mr. *John Eiser*, Engineer, produced a Letter as found by him in a Room belonging to a Priest in the Isle of *Aix*, without Cover or Superscription, the Day after  
the

the Fort was taken, dated, “ *A Rochefort ce 18,*” (the Month and Year not specified) the Postscript whereof is as follows.—“ *Je vous prie d’assurer Monsieur Et Madame le Comte de mon respect ; il conjecture que la Saison est trop avancé pour que les ennemies entreprennent rien sur nos Costes, mais la precaution de Monsieur le Gouverneur n’en est pas moins bonne.*”

Lieutenant Colonel Clerk said, That besides the Particulars he has before-mentioned, he met with another Circumstance that confirmed him in his Opinion about *Rochefort*, and that before he left *England*,—which is a Relation of the Port of *Rochefort*, printed in 1732. That Book gives a very clear Account how it comes to be in the Condition he has represented.—*Colbert*, who was Prime Minister of the *Finances*, intended, that there should be nothing but a simple Wall round *Rochefort*, that no Garrison of regular Troops might be put in it, on purpose to prevent Disputes between Land and Sea Officers. The Governor built a Rampart in the same Form as he supposes the simple Wall was intended ; that is to say, with Redans, than which nothing can be more absurd. *Signellai* disgraced the Governor upon that Account ; tho’ the Author takes his Part, and says, he followed the Plan of an Engineer.

Sir *John Mordaunt* begged leave to refer to an Examination taken by his Secretary Captain *Richard Davenport*, of *Pierre Girard*, Mariner, one of the *French* Prisoners, which being produced by the said Captain *Davenport*, was read as follows.—“ *Pierre Girard*, Mariner, says, That he is well acquainted with *Rochefort*, and was there on the 20th ; that there is a Ditch round the Place, of which two Thirds are full of Water, and the other Third may be filled at pleasure ; that the Avant Guard is fortified and defended by a fascine Battery of several Pieces of Cannon just finished.”

*Robert Boyd*, Esq; Comptroller of the Train, by direction of the Board, laid before them an exact Account

count of the Proportion of Brass Ordnance, Howitzers, Mortars, and Stores furnished from the Ordnance for this Expedition.

Sir *John Mordaunt* then addressed himself to the Board as follows,

“ I am conscious of having done my utmost to the best of my Judgment for his Majesty’s Service in the Conduct of this Expedition ; and I have submitted myself voluntarily and readily to this Examination. I desire no Favour or Partiality, and I know I shall have the most exact Justice in the Report this honourable Board will make.

“ I apprehend, that an Inquiry into the whole Conduct of an Expedition, without any Accusation formed, or any Charge laid, is a Proceeding not quite common ; and however free from Guilt a Man may feel himself, there are few who can stand so strict an Examination.

“ There is nothing but the high Opinion I have both of the Justice and Candour of this Board, could make me easy in such a Situation.

“ I therefore hope you will be indulgent to my Errors ; but I desire no Mercy for Guilt or known Disobedience, and with these Sentiments I submit myself to the Court.”

No Person having any thing farther to offer, all Parties were directed to withdraw,—when the Board proceeded to take the whole Matter before them into Consideration ; and after some Time,

*Adjourned to Thursday next at 11 o’Clock in the Forenoon.*

At a Meeting of the said General Officers, &c. (pursuant to Adjournment) on *Thursday* the 17th of *November* 1757.

The Board took into farther Consideration the several Matters before them relative to the Failure of the late Expedition, and came to several Resolutions ; which they directed to be stated in a Report to his Majesty,



Majesty, and a Draught thereof to be prepared and laid before them at their next Meeting.

*Adjourned till Monday the 21st Instant, at 11 o'Clock in the Forenoon.*

At a Meeting of the said General Officers, &c. on Monday the 21st of November, 1757.

The following Report to his Majesty, prepared agreeable to the Resolutions of the Board at the last Meeting, being laid before them, was approved and signed.

Report of the General Officers, &c. to his Majesty. *May it please your Majesty,*

**W**E the underwritten General Officers of the Army, in Obedience to your Majesty's War-rant, which bears Date the 1st Day of this present Month, commanding us strictly to examine into the Causes of the Failure of the late Expedition to the Coasts of *France*, and to report a State thereof, as it should appear to us, together with our Opinion there-upon, have, at several Meetings, perused and considered your Majesty's Orders and Instructions, as transmitted to us by the Right Honourable Mr. *Pitt*, your Majesty's principal Secretary of State, together with sundry Letters and other Papers therewith trans-mitted, and have heard and examined Lieutenant General Sir *John Mordaunt*, the Commander in Chief of the Land Forces, and other principal Officers employed on the said Expedition, with such Witnesses as either of them desired, and also such other Persons as seemed to us most likely to give any material Information; and in order that your Ma-jesty may be fully possessed of every Circumstance, which has appeared in the Course of this Inquiry, we beg Leave to lay before your Majesty the whole of our Examination, as contained in the Minutes of our Proceedings to this our Report annexed: And upon the most diligent and careful Review of the whole Matter, we do, in farther Obedience to your Royal Command, most humbly report to your Ma-jesty

jeſty the principal Cauſes of the Failure of the ſaid Expedition, as they appear to us, *viz.*

It appears, that one Cauſe of the Expedition having failed, is the not attacking Fort *Fouras* by Sea, at the ſame Time that it would have been attacked by Land, agreeable to the firſt Deſign, which certainly muſt have been of the greateſt Utility towards carrying your Maſteſty's Inſtructions into Execution. It was at firſt reſolved by Sir *Edward Hawke* (*Thierri* the Pilot of the *Magnanime* having undertaken the ſafe Conduct of a Ship to Fort *Fouras* for that Purpoſe) but afterwards laid aſide, upon the Representation of Vice Admiral *Knowles*, that the *Barſleur*, the Ship deſigned for that Service, was on Ground, at the Diſtance of between four and five Miles from the Shore; but as neither Sir *Edward Hawke*, nor the Pilot, could attend to give any Information upon that Head, we cannot preſume to offer any certain Opinion thereupon.

We conceive another Cauſe of the Failure of the Expedition to have been, that, inſtead of attempting to land, when the Report was received on the 24th of *September* from Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* and the Captains, who had been ſent out to ſound and reconnoitre, a Council of War was ſummoned and held on the 25th, in which it was unanimouſly reſolved not to land, as the Attempt upon *Rochefort* was neither adviſable nor practicable; but it does not appear to us, that there were then, or at any Time afterwards; either a Body of Troops or Batteries on the Shore, ſufficient to have prevented the attempting a Deſcent; in purſuance of the Inſtructions ſigned by your Maſteſty: Neither does it appear to us, that there were any ſufficient Reaſons to induce the Council of War to believe, that *Rochefort* was ſo far changed in reſpect of its Strength, or Poſture of Defence, ſince the Expedition was firſt reſolved on in *England*, as to prevent all Attempts of an Attack upon the Place, in order to burn and deſtroy the Docks, Magazines, Arſenals,

Arfenals, and Shipping, in Obedience to your Majesty's Commands.

And we think ourselves obliged to remark upon the Council of War of the 28th of *September*, that no Reason could have existed sufficient to prevent the Attempt of landing the Troops previous to that Day, as the Council then unanimously resolved to land with all possible Dispatch.

We beg Leave also to make one other Observation ; that after its being unanimously resolved to land in the Council of War of the 28th, the Resolution was taken of returning to *England*, without any regular or general Meeting of the said Council : but as that whole Operation was of so inconsiderable a Nature, we do not offer this to your Majesty as a Cause of the Failure of the Expedition, since we cannot but look upon the Expedition as having failed, from the Time the great Object of it was laid aside in the Council of War of the 25th.

All which is most humbly submitted to your Majesty's Wisdom.

*Privy-Garden,*  
21st November, 1757.

MARLBOROUGH.  
GEORGE SACKVILLE.  
JOHN WALDEGRAVE.

*A true Copy,*  
CHARLES GOULD,  
*Deputy Judge-Advocate-General.*







# A P P E N D I X,

CONTAINING

The P A P E R S referred to in the  
foregoing R E P O R T.



Numb. I. *Copy of a Letter, dated London, July 15, 1757, from Captain (now Lieutenant-colonel Clerk) to Sir John Ligonier, and transmitted to Mr. Secretary Pitt, with regard to Rochefort.*

SIR,

YOU have desired me to put down in Writing what I mentioned to your Excellency in regard of Rochefort.

In returning from *Gibraltar* in 1754, I went along Part of the western Coast of *France*, to see the Condition of some of their Fortifications of their Places of Importance, on purpose to judge, if an Attempt could be made with a Probability of Success, in case of a Rupture; and of the *French* drawing away their Troops to *Flanders, Italy, and Germany*, in the same Manner as they did in the last War. I had heard, that *Rochefort*, though a Place of the utmost Importance, had been very much neglected. I went there, and waited upon the Governor in my Regimentals, told him, that I was upon my Way to *England* from *Gibraltar*; and, that I came on purpose to see the Place, the Dock, and the Men of War. He was very polite; I was shewed every Thing; went aboard ten

E

Ships

Ships of the Line new built : and, an Engineer attended me in going round the Place.

I was surprised to find, that though there was a good Rampart with a Revetement, the greatest Part of it was not flanked but with Redans ; that there were no Outworks, no Covert-way, and in many Places no Ditch ; so that the Bottom of the Wall was seen at a Distance : That in other Places where the Earth had been taken out to form the Rampart, there was left about them a good Height of Ground, which was a Disadvantage to the Place : That for above the Length of a Front there was no Rampart, or even Intrenchment ; but as the Ground was low and marshy at that Place, being next the River, there were some small Ditches, which were dry, however, at Low-water ; yet the Bottom remained muddy and slimy.

Towards the River there was no Rampart, no Parapet, no Batteries on either Side. Towards the Land-side there was some high Ground very nigh the Place, perhaps at the Distance of about 150 or 200 Yards.

The Engineer told me, that the Place had remained in that Condition for above 70 or 80 Years.

I got no Plan of the Place, and put nothing down in Writing ; for I found that the whole Town had been talking of me, and thought it very extraordinary that I should be allowed to go about and see every Thing.

I burnt even some Sketches and Remarks I had by me upon other Places, that they might have no Hold of me, in case they searched my Baggage, and therefore could only expose themselves, as I had done nothing but what was open, above board, and with Permission.

However, as to Utility, I was as much satisfied as if I had got a Plan. In regard of the Profil indeed, I have thought since, that it would not have been amiss if I had known for certain the exact Height of the Rampart. I think that it could not well exceed

25 Feet. In *Martiniere's* Geographical Dictionary, it is called only 20 Feet high; perhaps the Parapet is not included.

I told your Excellency, that I had never seen any Plan of the Place; but as there had been no Alteration in the Works for so many Years, I made no question but that some old Plan of it might be found which would correspond exactly with what I said. In the *Forces de L'Europe*, which I have, there is no Plan of *Rockefort*, but I found one in the Duke of *Argyle's* Edition, which I borrowed, and shewed to your Excellency. It agrees exactly with what I said, and with the Sketch I drew of it before you from my Memory, except that a regular Ditch is represented every where, which is not the Case.

The River may be about 130 Yards broad. The Entrance is defended by two or three small Redoubts, which I did not see, nor could I venture even to go down and examine the Coast.

What I mentioned to your Excellency of the Method of insulating the Place, considering it upon the Footing of an immediate Assault, I have not put down; for, though it may be reasoned upon in a general View, yet many Things can only be fixed and determined immediately upon the Spot. I was told, that there are never any Troops at *Rockefort*, but the Marines. There might be about 1000 at that Time.

By the Expedition to *Port L'Orient* in 1746, it appeared to me, that the Country-people in Arms are very little better than our own; and that an Officer who possesses himself, might march safely from one End of a Province to another, with only five Companies of Grenadiers, where there are no regular Troops. They imagine at first, that they can fight, and their Intentions are good till it comes to the Point, when every Body gives Way almost before the Firing of a Platoon.



In writing this I have obeyed with Pleasure, as I have always done, your Excellency's Commands.

I am, &c.

ROBERT CLERK.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. II. *Minute, dated Arlington-Street, August, 1757, containing an Examination of a French Pilot.*

P R E S E N T.

Lord Anson

Sir Ed. Hawke

Lt.-Genl. Sir J. Mordaunt

Major-Genl. Conway

Lold Holderness

Mr. Secretary Pitt

General Ligonier

Admiral Knowles

Captain Clarke.

Le nommé, Joseph Thierry, Pilote François, Natif de Protestant de Religion, aiant été examiné, dit,

QU'IL a exercé le metier de pilote sur les cotes de France au dela de vingt ans, qu'il a servi comme premier pilote, a-bord de divers vaisseaux du roi de France, & nommément du Magnanime, sur lequel il a servi pendant l'espace de vingt & deux mois; qu'il a conduit le dit vaisseau le Magnanime plusieurs fois a la rade de l'isle D'Aix, & qu'il connoit bien l'entrée, & la sortie de la dite rade; que le chennel entre les isles d'Oleron & de Rhé a trois lieues de large, qu'il y a touvoié sur le Magnanime, que les *bancs* qu'il faut éviter sont pres de la terre, qu'on en peut distinguer les *brisans* a une distance considerable; qu'il y un banc nommé *le Boiard*, dont on ne courre pas grand risque moiënnant les *brisans* qui annoncent sa situation; que pour entrer a la rade d'Aix il n'y a pas de telles difficultes, qu'il soit necessaire d'avoir un pilote pour y conduire des grands vaisseaux; qu'il y a bon mouillage tant en dedans la rade, qu'en dehors en mer a 12 & 14 brasses d'eau jusqu' a Bayonne.

Que l'isle d'Aix a environ sept miles d'Angleterre de circuit, & un quarantaine de cabanes ou maisons rassemblées dans une espece de village, qu'il y a une batterie

batterie de vingt quatre, a vingt six canons, de 24 livres de bale, mais qu'il n'y a point de fortification, que les plus gros vaisseaux peuvent en approcher de bien pres, & que le vaisseau le *Magnanime seul* pourroit en peu de temps detruire la dite batterie.

Que les plus gros vaisseaux peuvent monter jusqu'a *Vergerot* a deux miles Angloises de l'embouchure de la riviere avec leurs canons & equipage, que la riviere est fort etroite.

Que l'on peut mettre du monde a terre au nord d'une batterie nommé *de Fourras*, sans etre ou du fort dans une prairie ou le terrain, est ferme & uni a la grande portée de canons des vaisseaux.

Que de l'endroit ou l'on met pied a terre jusqu'a *Rochefort*, il y a cinq miles Angloises, le chemin sec, & n'est point coupé par des fosses ny des marais.

Que la ville est presque entourée par un rampart, maisque l'endroit qui aboutit a la riviere des deux cotés il n'y a point de mur l'espace de soixante pas, qui n'est fermée simplement que par une barriere ou pallifade, & que le terrain pour aborder les dites palifades n'est coupé d'aucun fossé.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. III. *Memoire sur la Force actuelle de la France, & les Services auxquels elle est employée dans l'Année 1757, received July 28th, 1757;—and communicated at a Meeting at Lord Holderness's House to the Generals appointed on an Expedition to the Coasts of France.*

## MEMOIRE,

Sur la Force actuelle de la France par terre, & les Services auxquels elle est employée dans l'Année, 1757.

L'Armée Françoisse, au commencement des troubles presents, ne consistoit

## TRANSLATION.

## MEMORIAL,

Of the actual Force of France by Land, and the Services on which it is employed in the Year 1757.

THE French Army at the Beginning of the present Troubles, consisted

listoit qu'en 157,347 hommes, non compris la milice & les invalides. Elle étoit composée de la maniere suivante.

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Infanterie Françoisse    | 98,330 |
| Artillerie — —           | 4,100  |
| Infanterie Etrangere —   | 25,589 |
| Maison du Roi, Cavalerie | 3,210  |
| Cavalerie Françoisse —   | 14,520 |
| Cavalerie Etrangere —    | 960    |
| Dragons — —              | 7,680  |
| Hussars — —              | 800    |
| Troupes Legeres —        | 2,158  |

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157,347

only of 157,347 Men, not including the Militia and the Invalids. It was composed in the following Manner.

|                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| French Foot — —         | 98,330 |
| Artillery — —           | 4,100  |
| Foreign Foot — —        | 25,589 |
| King's Household, Horse | 3,210  |
| French Horse — —        | 14,520 |
| Foreign Horse — —       | 960    |
| Dragoons — —            | 7,680  |
| Hussars — —             | 800    |
| Light Troops — —        | 2,158  |

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157,347

Au mois d'Août, 1755, on fit une augmentation de quatre compagnies de 45 hommes chacune, dans chaque bataillon du regiment du roy, & de quatre compagnies de 40 hommes chacune, dans chaque bataillon ordinaire de l'infanterie Françoisse; ce qui faisoit en tout 29,620 hommes.

Environ le même tems, une augmentation se fit dans les dragons, qui porta chaque regiment à quatre escadrons de 640 hommes, montant en tout à 2,560 hommes.

Au mois de Decembre de la même année 1755, une augmentation se fit pareillement dans la cavalerie, de dix hommes par compagnie, en tout 5560 hommes.

Les

In the Month of *August* 1755, an Augmentation was made of four Companies of 45 Men each, in every Battalion of the King's regiment, and of four Companies of 40 Men each, in every common Battalion of *French* Foot; which made in all 29,620 Men.

About the same Time an Augmentation was made in the Dragoons, which made up every Regiment four Squadrons of 640 Men; making in all 2560 Men.

In the Month of *December* of the same Year 1755, an Augmentation was also made in the Horse, of ten Men a Company; in all 5560 Men.

The

Les volontaires royaux, & le corps de *Fischer*, furent aussi augmentés; nous ne savons pas au juste de combien; mais, selon nos avis, cette augmentation alloit à 680 hommes, ou environ.

Toutes ces différentes augmentations montent à 38,420 hommes; & par conséquent l'armée Française (sans compter la milice & les invalides, que je mets au delà de 67,000) est composée de 196,000 hommes. Ils ont, à la vérité, levé deux nouveaux Régiments dans le pays de Liege; mais, malgré tout cela, leurs troupes réglées sont au dessous de deux cent mille hommes.

Les îles de *Minorque* & de *Corse*, avec les colonies en Amérique, occupent au moins 25000 hommes; ils ont fait embarquer, au printemps, 3 à 4000 hommes différents services aux deux Indes; l'armée de M. le maréchal d'Estrees, si les régimens étoient complets, iroit à 92,000 hommes; celle du maréchal de Richelieu est de 32,665. Il faut, aussi compter un corps de 6 ou 7000 hommes,

The royal Volunteers, and *Fischer's* Corps were also augmented; we do not exactly know to what Number; but, according to our Advices, this Augmentation came to 680 Men, or thereabouts.

These several Augmentations amount to 38,420 Men; and consequently the *French* Army (without reckoning the Militia and the Invalids, which I put at above 67,000) is composed of 196,000 Men. They have, it is true, raised two new Regiments in the Country of *Liege*; but, notwithstanding that, their regular Troops are under 200,000 Men.

The Islands of *Minorca* and *Corfica*, with the Colonies in *America*, take up 25,000 Men at least; they embarked in the Spring 3 or 4000 Men for different Services in the two *Indies*; Marshal *D'Estrees'* Army, if the Regiments were complete, would amount to 92,000 Men; Marshal *Richelieu's* is 32,665. A Body of 6 or 7000 Men must also

qu'ils sont obligés de tenir en garnison à *Toulon, Marseilles, Cette, Antibes, &c.* à porté de cette partie de leur Côte.

Selon ce calcul, donc, voilà 160,000 hommes de troupes réglées employées; il restera environ 40,000 hommes pour toutes les garnisons depuis *Sedan* jusqu'aux frontières de la *Suisse*, de même que pour celles du *Roussillon* et de *Guienne*, sans parler de la *Flandres* et de la côte.

Nous comptons environ 20000 hommes placés depuis *St. Valery* jusqu' à *Bergue*, de façon que nous avons tout lieu de croire, qu'il ne peut pas y avoir 10,000 hommes de plus, depuis *St. Valery* jusqu' à *Bordeaux*.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

be reckoned, which they are obliged to keep in Garrison at *Toulon, Marseilles, Cette, Antibes, &c.* at hand for that Part of the Coast.

According to this Calculation then, there are 160,000 regular Troops employed; there will remain about 40,000 Men for all the Garrisons from *Sedan* to the Frontiers of *Switzerland*, as also for those of *Roussillon* and *Guienne*, without speaking of *Flanders* and the Coast.

We reckon about 20,000 Men placed from *St. Valery* to *Bergue*; so that we have all the Reason to believe, that there cannot be 10,000 Men more from *St. Valery* to *Bordeaux*.

A true Translation.

Robert Wood.

Numb. IV. *Copy of his Majesty's secret Instructions to Sir Edward Hawke, dated Aug. 5. 1757.*

G E O R G E R.

*Secret Instructions for our trusty and well-beloved Sir Edward Hawke, Knight of the Bath, Admiral of the blue Squadron of our Fleet, and Commander in Chief of our Ships to be employed in a secret Expedition for our Service ; or for such other Officer on whom the Command of our said Ships may devolve. Given at our Court at Kensington, the fifth Day of August 1757, in the thirty-first Year of our Reign.*

**W**HEREAS we have thought fit to employ a considerable Body of our Land-Forces on a secret Expedition, under the Command of our trusty and well-beloved Sir *John Mordaunt*, Knight of the Bath, Lieutenant-general of our Forces ; and whereas we have appointed you to be Commander in chief of a Squadron of our Ships of War, to act in Conjunction, and co-operate with the said Sir *John Mordaunt*, in the Execution of the Services prescribed to him : For your better Discharge of the great and important Trust thereby reposed in you, we have judged it proper to give you the following Instructions.

1. You shall immediately, upon the Receipt of these our Instructions, repair to *Spithead*, where we have ordered a Squadron, consisting of at least 16 Ships of the Line, and a proportionable Number of Frigates, to rendezvous, together with the Transport-Vessels for our Troops, (who are to embark from the *Isle of Wight*) and also the Vessels with the Artillery and Stores, which Squadron and Transports you are to take under your Command ; and, so soon as the Troops shall be embarked, you are to proceed without Loss of Time to the Coasts of *France*.

2. Whereas we have determined, with the Blessing of God, to prosecute the just War in which we are engaged against the *French King*, with the utmost Vigour ; and it being highly expedient, and of urgent Necessity, to make some Expedition that may cause a  
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Diversion, and engage the Enemy to employ in their own Defence a considerable Part of their Forces destined to invade and oppress the Liberties of the Empire, and to subvert the Independency of *Europe*; and if possible to make some effectual Impression on the Enemy, which by disturbing and shaking the Credit of their public Loans; impairing the Strength and Resources of their Navy, as well as disconcerting and in Part frustrating their dangerous and extensive Operations of War, may reflect Lustre on our Arms, and add Life and Strength to the common Cause; and we being persuaded, that nothing in the present Situation of Affairs can so speedily and essentially annoy and distress *France*, as a successful Enterprize against *Rochefort*: Our Will and Pleasure is, That you do co-operate in attempting as far as shall be found practicable a Descent on the *French* Coast, at or near *Rochefort*, in order to attack, if practicable, and by a vigorous Impression force that Place; and to burn and destroy to the utmost of your Power all Docks, Magazines, Arsenals, and Shipping, that shall be found there, and exert such other Efforts as shall be judged most proper for annoying the Enemy. After this Attempt on *Rochefort* shall either have succeeded or failed, and in case the Circumstances of our Fleet and Forces shall, with Prospect of Success, still admit of further Operations, *Port l'Orient* and *Bordeaux* are to be considered next as the most important Objects of our Arms on the Coast of *France*; and our Will and Pleasure accordingly is, That you do proceed successively to an Attempt on both or either of those Places, as shall be judged practicable, or any other Place, that shall be thought most adviseable from *Bordeaux* homewards to *Havre*, in order to carry and spread with as much Rapidity as may be, a warm Alarm along the maritime Provinces of *France*: And you are, as far as you shall be able with the Fleet under your Command, to be aiding and assisting to Sir *John Mordaunt* in the Performance of the several Services aforesaid.

3. In case, by the Blessing of God upon our Arms, our Forces should become Masters of any Places on the Coast of *France*, our Will and Pleasure is, That they do not keep Possession thereof, but that after demolishing and destroying as far as may be all Works, Defences, Magazines, Arsenals, Shipping, and naval Stores, you do proceed successively on the ulterior Operations of this Expedition, according as any of them may be judged adviseable, and may be performed within such Time as shall be consistent with your Return with the Fleet under your Command, so as to be in *England* at or about, as near as may be, the End of *September*, unless the Circumstances of our Ships and Forces shall necessarily require their Return sooner; and our Troops are to be landed at *Portsmouth*, or such other of our Ports as the Exigency of the Case may suggest.

4. Whereas it is necessary, that upon certain Occasions, Councils of War should be held, we have thought fit to appoint, and do hereby appoint such a Council, which shall consist of four of our principal Sea-Commanders, and of an equal Number of our principal Land-Officers, including the Commanders in Chief of our Sea and Land-Forces (except in Cases happening at Land, relating to the carrying on any military Operations to be performed by our Land-Forces only; and in like Manner, except in Cases happening at Sea, with Regard to Operations to be performed by the Fleet only) and all such Sea and Land-Officers are hereby respectively directed, from Time to Time, to be aiding and assisting, with their Advice as often as they shall be called together by you, or the Officer commanding our Land-Forces for that Purpose; and in all such Councils of War when assembled, the Majority of Voices shall determine the Resolutions thereof; and in Case the Voices shall happen to be equal, the President shall have the casting Vote.

5. Whereas the Success of this Expedition will very much depend upon an entire good Understanding



ing between our Sea and Land-Officers; we do hereby strictly enjoin and require you, on your Part, to maintain and cultivate such a good Understanding and Agreement, and to order the Sailors and Marines, and also the Soldiers serving as Part of the Complements of our Ships, to assist our Land-Forces, if judged expedient, by taking Post on Shore, manning Batteries, covering the Boats, securing the safe Reimbarkation of the Troops, and such other Services at Land as may be consistent with the Safety of our Fleet; as we have instructed our General and Commander in chief of our Forces, on his Part, to entertain and cultivate the same good Understanding and Agreement, and to order that the Soldiers under his Command shall man the Ships when there shall be Occasion for them, and when they can be spared from the Land-Service; and, in order to establish the strictest Union that may be between you and our said General and Commander in chief of our Land-Forces, you are hereby required to communicate these Instructions to him, as he is directed to communicate those he has received from us to you.

6. As our Service may require that you, or the Commander in chief of our Land-Forces, should, on particular Occasions, dispatch a Sloop or small Frigate to *England* with Intelligence, you shall always take Care to have with you one or more Sloops or small Frigates for that Purpose.

7. You are to transmit constant and particular Accounts of your Proceedings to one of our principal Secretaries of State, and to our Commissioners for executing the Office of our High-Admiral of *Great-Britain*; and you shall observe and follow such Orders and Instructions as you shall receive from us under our Sign-Manual, or from one of our principal Secretaries of State, or from our Commissioners for executing the Office of our High-Admiral of *Great-Britain* for the Time being.

G. R.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb.

Numb. V. *Copy of his Majesty's secret Instructions to Sir John Mordaunt, dated Aug. 5th, 1757.*

GEORGE R.

*Secret Instructions for our trusty and well-beloved Sir John Mordaunt, Knight of the Bath, Lieutenant-general of our Forces, whom we have appointed General and Commander in Chief of all and singular our Troops and Land-forces, appointed, or to be appointed, for a secret Expedition, for our Service; or for such other Officer, on whom the command in Chief of our said Troops and Land-forces may devolve. Given at our Court at Kensington, the 5th Day of August 1757, in the thirty-first Year of our Reign.*

**H**AVING by our Commission, bearing Date the third Day of this Instant, appointed you to be General and Commander in Chief of all and singular our Forces, appointed, or to be appointed, for a secret Expedition; for your better Discharge of the great and important Trust thereby reposed in you, we have judged it proper to give you the following Instructions.

1st, You shall immediately, upon the Receipt of these our Instructions, repair to the *Isle of Wight*, where we have appointed Ships to convey you, and the Forces under your Command, to the Coasts of *France*; and so soon as the said Forces shall be embarked, you shall accordingly proceed, without Loss of Time, under Convoy of a Squadron of our Ships of War, commanded by our trusty and well-beloved *Sir Edward Hawke*, Knight of the *Bath*, Admiral of the blue Squadron of our Fleet, whom we have appointed Commander in Chief of our Ships to be employed in this Expedition; the said Admiral, or the Commander in Chief of our said Ships for the Time being, being instructed to co-operate with you, and to be aiding and assisting in all such Enterprizes, as, by these our Instructions, you shall be directed to undertake for our Service.

2d, Whereas we have determined, with the Blessing of God, to prosecute the just War, in which we  
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are engaged against the French King, with the utmost Vigour ; and it being highly expedient, and of urgent Necessity, to make some Expedition, that may cause a Diversion, and engage the Enemy to employ in their own Defence, a considerable Part of their Forces, destined to invade and oppress the Liberties of the Empire, and to subvert the Independency of *Europe* ; and, if possible, to make some effectual Impression on the Enemy, which, by disturbing and shaking the Credit of their public Loans ; impairing the Strength and Resources of their Navy, as well as disconcerting, and, in Part, frustrating their dangerous and extensive Operations of War, may reflect Lustre on our Arms, and add Life and Strength to the common Cause ; and whereas we are persuaded, that nothing in the present Situation of Affairs can so speedily and essentially annoy and distress *France*, as a successful Enterprize against *Rockefort* ; our Will and Pleasure is, That you do attempt, as far as shall be found practicable, a Descent, with the Forces under your Command, on the *French Coast* at or near *Rockefort*, in order to attack, if practicable, and by a vigorous Impression, force that Place ; and to burn and destroy, to the utmost of your Power, all Docks, Magazines, Arsenals, and Shipping, that shall be found there, and exert such other Efforts as you shall judge most proper for annoying the Enemy.

3d, After the Attempt on *Rockefort* shall either have succeeded or failed ; and in case the Circumstances of our Forces and Fleet shall, with Prospect of Success, still admit of further Operations ; you are next to consider Port *L'Orient* and *Bourdeaux*, as the most important Objects of our Arms, on the Coast of *France* ; and our Will and Pleasure accordingly is, That you do proceed, successively, to an Attempt on both, or either of those Places, as shall be judged practicable ; or on any other Place that shall be thought most adviseable, from *Bourdeaux* homewards to *Havre*, in order to carry and spread, with as much

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Rapidity as may be, a warm Alarm along the maritime Provinces of *France*.

4th, In case, by the Blessing of God upon our Arms, you shall make yourself Master of any Place on the Coast of *France*, our Will and Pleasure is, That you do not keep Possession thereof; but that, after demolishing and destroying, as far as may be, all Works, Defences, Magazines, Arsenals, Shipping, and naval Stores, you do proceed, successively, on the ulterior Operations of this Expedition, according as any of them shall be judged adviseable, and may be performed within such Time as shall be consistent with your Return, with the Troops under your Command, so as to be in *England* at, or about, as near as may be, the End of September, unless the Circumstances of our Forces and Fleet shall necessarily require their Return sooner; and you are to land the Troops at *Portsmouth*, or such other of our Ports as the Exigency of the Case may suggest.

5th, Whereas it is necessary, that upon certain Occasions, you should have the Assistance of a Council of War, we have thought fit to appoint such a Council, which shall consist of four of our principal Land-officers, and of an equal Number of our principal Sea-commanders, including the Commanders in Chief of our Land and Sea-forces, (except in Cases happening at Land, relating to the carrying on any military Operations, to be performed by our Land-forces only, in which Cases you may call a Council of War, consisting of such Officers of our Land-forces as you shall think proper) and all such Land and Sea-officers, in the several Cases before-mentioned, are hereby respectively directed, from Time to Time, to be aiding and assisting with their Advice, so often as they shall be called together by you, or by the Commander in Chief of our Squadron, for that Purpose; and in all such Councils of War, when assembled, the Majority of Voices shall determine the Resolutions thereof; and in case the Voices shall happen to be equal, the President shall have the casting Vote.

6th,

6th, And whereas the Success of this Expedition will very much depend upon an intire good Understanding between our Land and Sea-officers, we do hereby strictly enjoin and require you, on your Part, to maintain and cultivate such good Understanding and Agreement; and to order, that the Soldiers under your Command should man the Ships where there shall be Occasion for them, and when they can be spared from the Land-service; as the Commander in Chief of our Squadron is instructed, on his Part, to entertain and cultivate the same good Understanding and Agreement; and to order the Sailors and Marines, and also the Soldiers, serving as Part of the Complements of our Ships, to assist our Land-forces, if judged expedient, by taking Post on Shore, manning Batteries, covering the Boats, securing the safe Re-embarkation of the Troops, and such other Services at Land as may be consistent with the Safety of our Fleet: and in order to establish the strictest Union that may be between you, and the Commander in Chief of our Ships, you are hereby required to communicate these Instructions to him; and he will be directed to communicate those he shall receive to you.

7th, You shall, from Time to Time, and as you shall have Opportunity, send constant Accounts of your Proceedings, in the Execution of these our Instructions, to one of our principal Secretaries of State, from whom you will receive such farther Orders and Directions as we may think proper to give you.

G. R.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. VI. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt, to Sir Edward Hawke, dated Whitehall, August 5th, 1757.*

SIR,

**I** SEND you herewith the secret Instructions, the King has been pleased to sign for your Guidance and Direction, in the important Command with which his Majesty has honoured you: I have only to add

add my most sincere Wishes for your Success on this Occasion, and to assure you, that I am, &c.

W. PITT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. VII. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt, to Major-General Conway, Major-General Cornwallis, Vice-Admiral Knowles, and Rear-Admiral Brodrick, dated Whitehall, August 5th, 1757. mutatis mutandis.*

SIR,

I HAVE the King's Commands to send you the inclosed sealed Packet, containing an attested Copy of his Majesty's secret Instructions to Sir *John Sir Edward Hawke. Mordaunt*, which you are to open, in case the Command in Chief of the *Fleet.* the *Troops* now under that of Sir *Sir Edward Hawke. John Mordaunt*, should devolve upon you, in order that you may thereby be fully apprised of the King's Pleasure, and be enabled to carry his Majesty's Intentions into Execution, in which I am persuaded you will exert your utmost Endeavours. I am, &c.

W. PITT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. VIII. *Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Hawke, to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated on board the Ramilies at Spithead, 7th August, 1757.*

SIR,

I Received your Letter of the 5th Instant, inclosing the secret Instructions his Majesty has been pleased to sign for my Guidance and Direction in the Command with which he has honoured me; I beg you will do me the Justice to believe, that I shall exert my utmost Abilities for his Honour, and the Service of my Country. I am, with the greatest Respect, &c.

ED. HAWKE.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. IX. *Copy of a Letter from Major-General Cornwallis, to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Newport, Isle of Wight, August 6th, 1757.*

SIR,

I AM just now honoured with your Letter, with an inclosed sealed Packet, containing an attested Copy of his Majesty's secret Instructions to Sir *John Mordaunt*, which I shall (conformable to your Instructions) open, in case the Command in Chief of the Troops now under Sir *John Mordaunt*, should devolve upon me, that I may thereby be enabled to carry his Majesty's Intentions into Execution; in which I will exert my utmost Endeavours, with true Zeal for his Majesty's Service. I am, &c.

ED. CORNWALLIS.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. X. *Copy of a Letter from Vice-Admiral Knowles, to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Portsmouth, August 6th, 1757.*

SIR,

I TAKE this Opportunity of acknowledging the Receipt of the Letter you honoured me with, containing an attested Copy of his Majesty's secret Instructions to Sir *Edward Hawke*, which shall remain inviolable in my Hands, unless the Contingency you mention make it needful to open them. I am, &c.

CHAS. KNOWLES.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XI. *Copy of a Letter from Rear-Admiral Brodrick, to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Portsmouth, August 6th, 1757.*

SIR,

I AM honoured with your Letter of the 5th Instant, with a sealed Copy of secret Instructions for Sir *Edward Hawke*, which shall remain so, unless the Necessity

cessity of the Service should require their being opened. I am, &c.

THOS. BRODRICK.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XII. *Copy of an Order from the Lords of the Admiralty to Sir Edward Hawke, dated August 5th, 1757.*

*By the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of Great-Britain and Ireland, &c.*

**H**AVING ordered the Commanders of the King's Ships and Vessels named in the annexed List, to follow your Orders for their farther Proceedings: you are hereby required and directed to take under your Command such sixteen of these of the Line as can soonest be got ready to proceed on Service, together with the Frigates and small Vessels, and use the utmost Expedition in getting them manned and ready in all Respects for the Sea; in case you take the *Royal William*, you are to cause Vice-Admiral *Mof-tyn's* Retinue and Servants to be removed into the *Royal Ann* or *Barfleur*, which ever of them you shall leave behind. And having ordered Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, and Rear-Admiral *Brodrick*, to put themselves under your Command; you are hereby required to take them under your Command accordingly. Given, &c. the 5th of *August*, 1757.

To Sir *Edward Hawke* Knight  
of the *Bath*, Admiral of the  
Blue.

ANSON.

G. HAY.

G. ELLIOT.

J. FORBES.

By Command of their Lordships, *J. Cleveland.*

*List of Ships and Vessels, whose Commanders are directed to follow Sir Edward Hawke's Orders.*

| Guns. | Ships.          | Guns. | Ships.          |
|-------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|
| 100   | Royal George    | 90    | Namur           |
|       | Royal Sovereign | 84    | Royal William   |
| 90    | Ramillies       | 80    | Barfleur        |
|       | Neptune         |       | Princess Amelia |
|       | Royal Ann       | 74    | Magnanime       |
|       |                 | F 2   | Tor-            |



| Guns. | Ships.      | Guns.    | Ships.     |
|-------|-------------|----------|------------|
| 74    | Torbay      | 28       | Coventry   |
|       | Dublin      | 18       | Cormorant  |
| 70    | Burford     | 16       | Escort     |
| 64    | Alcide      | 16       | Pellican   |
| 60    | America     | Fireship | Pluto      |
|       | Achilles    |          | Proserpine |
|       | Dunkirk     | Bomb     | Firedrake  |
|       | Medway      |          | Infernal   |
| 50    | Norwich     | Cutter   | Hunter     |
|       |             | Bufs     | Canterbury |
| 32    | Southampton |          | Medway     |

Numb. XIII. *Copy of an Order from the Lords of the Admiralty to Sir Edward Hawke, dated August 6, 1757.*

*By the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High-Admiral of Great Britain and Ireland, &c.*

IN pursuance of his Majesty's Pleasure, signified to us by Mr. Pitt, one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, you are hereby required and directed, in Addition to our Order of Yesterday's Date, to proceed with the Squadron put under your Command, and the Transport-Vessels named in the inclosed List (which are ordered to join you and follow your Orders) to *Spithead*, where you will receive his Majesty's Pleasure for your future Conduct; and you are strictly to follow such Orders and Instructions as you shall receive from his Majesty, or one of his principal Secretaries of State. Given *&c.* 6th Aug. 1757.

To the Hon. Sir *Edward Hawke*,  
Ad. of the Blue, *&c.* at *Portsmouth*.

ANSON,  
G. HAY,  
J. FORBES,

By Command of their Lordships, *J. Cleveland.*

*A List of Transports.*

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Maria Theresa          | Peggy               |
| Duke of Cumberland     | Friend's Adventure  |
| Mill's Frigate         | Three Sisters       |
| Charles                | Lion                |
| Benjamin               | Patience            |
| Mathias                | Gowland             |
| Lark                   | Good Intent (2)     |
| Respect                | Freedom             |
| Queen of Spain         | John and Thomas     |
| Alexander              | Yarmouth            |
| Nazareth               | Thomas and Mary     |
| Mary (2)               | William and Mary    |
| Amity's Succession     | Violet              |
| Elizabeth (1)          | Parnassus           |
| Elizabeth (2)          | Constantia          |
| Neptune                | Antelope            |
| Good Intent (1)        | Providence and Jane |
| Providence Increase    | Baltimore           |
| Royal Union            | New Phillis         |
| Restoration            | James and Mary      |
| Mary (1)               | John's Adventure    |
| Unity                  | Samuel and Robert   |
| James and Henrietta    | Prince George       |
| Duke of Cumberland (2) | Prosperous Amelia   |
| Ruffel                 |                     |

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Numb. XIV. *Copy of a Letter from Sir John Mordaunt to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Isle of Wight, Aug. 11. 1757, ten at Night.*

SIR,

**B**EING honoured with his Majesty's Commands to correspond with you, I think it my Duty to acquaint you, that on my Arrival here on *Monday* last, I was disappointed in finding none of the Transports were come round, and the more so in that I have not yet been able to hear any positive Account of them: I have, however, employed this Interval in giving such Orders as I thought necessary, to have the

Troops here in Readiness for their Embarkation at a Moment's Warning.

Having, on Perusal of my Commission, some Doubt how far I am empowered to carry the Sentences of Courts-Martial in capital Cases into Execution, during my Abode within his Majesty's Dominions, I should be glad, as soon as may be, to know what is his Majesty's Intention on that Head, as there are now many Deserters with us ordered for immediate Trial.

I must also beg Leave to trouble you farther, on a Matter which occurs to me relative to the Service I am going upon, which is, that having, since my Arrival here, conversed with Sir *Edward Hawke*, and Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, who both seem of Opinion, that it is possible, from the Nature of the Navigation to *Rocheport*, the Fleet may be detained even in Sight of the Coast of *France*, for a Week or ten Days, without being able to get into the Road, or off the Isle *d'Aix*; during which time an Alarm will necessarily be given in those Parts. This Conjunction and Situation, if it should happen, appears to me so very delicate, and equally to the other General Officers on the Expedition, who may by Accident to the first in Command, come to be under the same Difficulty (the Success of our Undertaking depending, as I apprehend, on the Suddenness of its Execution) that I should be glad, if it is thought proper, to have a Direction, how I am to act in that Case.

I send this by an Officer, who will take Care to deliver it safely. I am, &c.

J. MORDAUNT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XV. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt to Sir John Mordaunt, dated Whitehall, Aug. 13. 1757.*

SIR,

I Immediately laid your Letter of the 11th instant, at Night, before the King, and am commanded by his Majesty to let you know, That his Royal Intentions

tentions are, that you should, by virtue of your Commission, carry the Sentences of Courts-Martial, in capital Cases, into Execution, during your Abode within his Majesty's Dominions, so long as the Troops under your Command shall continue under their present Destination, according to the King's Orders and Instructions.

With regard to the supposed Case, as stated in your Letter, and arising from Conversation had with Sir *Edward Hawke* and Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, namely, that it is possible the Fleet may be detained in Sight of the Coast of *France*, for a Week or ten Days, without being able to get into the Road of *Rockefort*, or off the *Ile d'Aix*, during which Time an Alarm will necessarily be given in those Parts; in which Case you express a Desire, if thought proper, to have a particular Direction, how to act; I am commanded thereupon by the King, to signify to you his Majesty's Pleasure, That you, or such other Officer, on whom the Command may devolve, do, in Conformity to the Latitude given by his Majesty's Instructions, judge of the Practicability of the Service, on the Spot, according as contingent Events, and particular Circumstances, may require; the King judging it highly prejudicial to the Good of his Service to give particular Orders and Directions, with regard to possible contingent Cases that may arise.

I am, &c.

W. PITT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XVI. *Copy of a Letter from Sir John Mordaunt to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Head-Quarters, Newport, Aug. 20. 1757.*

SIR,

I Have the Honour of your Commands, dated *August 13th*, and you may depend upon it, that his Majesty's Orders shall be most punctually observed.

Mr. *Thames*, who has long been, and now is, Agent for the Transports, came here the 17th from *Portsmouth*: He said, he came over on Purpose, from

thinking it his Duty to inform me, the Transports were not sufficient for the Number of Troops. I own his Conversation much puzzled me, as I know our Expedition should meet with no Delay on one Hand, and that the Preservation of the Soldier's Healths ought on the other to be thought on. At length I recollected two of the Commissioners of the Admiralty were at *Portsmouth*, to whom I sent a Letter, a Copy of which I now enclose to you. Though I have since heard nothing from the Commissioners or Mr. *Thames*, I thought it my Duty to mention this Circumstance to you, being informed last Night, by a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke*, that an Express is sent to the Navy-Board upon this Occasion.

The Troops are in great Spirits, and wait impatiently for the Transports.

I am, &c.

J. MORDAUNT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XVII. *Copy of a Letter from Sir John Mordaunt, to Thomas Orby Hunter and Gilbert Elliott, Esquires, dated Head-Quarters Newport, Aug. 17. 1757, enclosed in Sir John Mordaunt's Letter to Mr. Secretary Pitt, of the 20th Aug. 1757.*

GENTLEMEN,

**M**R. *Thames*, Agent for the Transports, has just been with us, and says, he thinks it his Duty to mention, that the Transports are not sufficient to carry the Number of Troops. We send him with this Letter, that he may explain his Reasons for the Opinion he gives, and if you find them satisfactory, we flatter ourselves some Method may be found, without occasioning Delay, to redress the Grievance. I am, Gentlemen, &c.

(Signed)

J. MORDAUNT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb.

Numb. XVIII. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt, to Sir Edward Hawke, dated Aug. 23. 1757.*

SIR,

**A** Doubt having been started by Mr. *Thames*, Agent for the Transports at *Portsmouth*, whether the Vessels ordered there will be sufficient for the Number of Troops; I am commanded to signify to you the King's Pleasure, that in case of any Exigency, you do receive on board the Men of War, such Part of the Troops as may be necessary, and can be accommodated therein without Prejudice to his Majesty's Ships.

I am, &c.

W. PITT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XIX. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt to Sir John Mordaunt, dated Aug. 23. 1757.*

SIR,

**I** Have received the Favour of your Letter of the 20th Instant, and have, in consequence thereof, made the necessary Enquiries, with regard to the Doubt started by Mr. *Thames*, that the Transports ordered to *Portsmouth* would not be sufficient for the Number of Troops.

The inclosed Papers, containing the Orders given by the Admiralty on this Subject, will, I am persuaded, give you full Satisfaction, and remove any Doubts of this Sort; and, tho' there is the greatest Reason to imagine that a sufficient Quantity of Transport-Vessels has been provided for this Service, I have, however, signified the King's Pleasure to Sir *Edward Hawke* by this Night's Post, that he should, in case of any Exigency, receive on board the Men of War, such a Number of the Troops as may be necessary, and can be accommodated therein, without Prejudice to his Majesty's Service.

I am, &c.

W. PITT,

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb.

Numb XX. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Cleveland to Sir Edward Hawke, at Portsmouth, dated Admiralty-Office, Aug. 19. 1757, enclosed in Mr. Secretary Pitt's Letter to Sir John Mordaunt of the 23d Aug. 1757.*

SIR,

MY Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having been informed, that one Mr. *Thames*, a Person sent to *Portsmouth* by the Navy-Board to assist the Agent for Transports in the Embarkation of the Troops, has represented to Sir *John Mordaunt*, and yourself, that the Tonnage for the Troops is not sufficient, those that went to *l'Orient* in 1746 being allowed one Ton and half to each Man, their Lordships command me to acquaint you, that they are extremely surpris'd and displeas'd at the said *Thames's* Behaviour, in raising unnecessary Difficulties and Uneasinesses; and, that they may not have any ill Effect, their Lordships direct me to acquaint you, that the Rate of one Ton a Man is as much as has been allowed on the like Services in former Times; that with regard to the Troops sent to Port *l'Orient*, they had a greater Allowance, on account of their being originally designed for *Louisbourg*; but that you may be satisfi'd of the whole Tonnage, I beg Leave to refer you to the List of all the Transports sent to you in the Lords' Order of the 6th Instant, (to which the prosperous *Amelia* of 400 Tons is to be added) amounting to about 12400 Tons, 9500 of which are fitted for the Reception of the Troops, which will probably be far short of 8000; wherefore their Lordships recommend it to you to endeavour to remove any Uneasiness that Mr. *Thames's* Representation may have created, they being thoroughly satisfi'd that no Inconveniencies whatever will attend the present Allowance; but, on the contrary, the Service will be attended with less Accidents and Delays, by having fewer Ships.

I am, &c.

J. CLEVELAND.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb.

Numb. XXI. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Cleveland to Sir Edward Hawke, dated August 20th, 1757, enclosed in Mr. Secretary Pitt's Letter to Sir John Mordaunt of the 23d of August, 1757.*

SIR,

**I** Have communicated to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your Letter of Yesterday, informing their Lordships, that upon a Consultation with Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, and the Director of the Embarkation, you were unanimously of Opinion, that at least four thousand Ton of Transports are still wanting; and am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you, that they have Reason to believe this Person, who the Navy-Board have sent to *Portsmouth*, is ignorant in what Manner the Transports are fitted, otherwise he could not mistake so much in his Calculation; for these Ships have all of them two flush Platforms between Decks for the Men to lay their Bedding upon, by which Means many more can be conveniently stowed than in Cabbins, the usual Method of fitting Transports; wherefore the Lords are of Opinion there will be sufficient Room, agreeable to what I writ you in my Letter Yesterday; however, to remove the Difficulties and Uneasiness which Mr. *Thames* has raised, Mr. *Cockburne*, the Comptroller of the Navy, is sent to *Portsmouth* with Directions to do every Thing possible, and to furnish such other Ships as shall be ready, if necessary.

I am, &c.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XXII. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Cleveland to Mr. Cockburne, dated August 21st, 1757, enclosed in Mr. Secretary Pitt's Letter to Sir John Mordaunt of the 23d of August, 1757.*

SIR,

**I**N answer to your Letter of Yesterday to my Lord *Anson*, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you, that although they



they are persuaded the Transports coming round from the River to *Portsmouth*, are sufficient for the Troops that are to embark on the present Expedition ; yet to prevent Uneasiness or Dissatisfaction in any Persons whatever, their Lordships approve of your adding the five or six hundred Ton of Shipping you mention to be employed as you propose : Also the *Jason's* being properly fitted to carry 500 Men, by leaving behind her lower Tier of Guns, which their Lordships hope will quiet the Minds of every one, without the Addition of the *Chesterfield*, a Ship wanted on very material Service ; however, she will be getting ready ; but their Lordships direct me to observe to you, that nothing herein-mentioned is intended, if it shall be found to delay the Transports a Moment after they arrive at *Spithead*, as the Success of the whole depends upon their sailing with the utmost Expedition ; wherefore their Lordships recommend it to you to exert yourself in forwarding this Service, and Orders in Form will be forwarded, when they meet To-morrow, this being sent to save Time.

I am, &c.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XXIII. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Cockburne to Mr. Cleveland, dated August 23d, 1757, enclosed in Mr. Secretary Pitt's Letter to Sir John Mordaunt, of the 23d of August, 1757,*

SIR,

YOU will please to acquaint their Lordships that I went over this Morning to the *Isle of Wight*, to talk with Sir *John Mordaunt* about the Tonnage of the Transports, and found Sir *John* had been informed that a Ton and a Half to a Man was the least that had ever been allowed to Troops on foreign Voyages, or where there was a Probability of their continuing any considerable Time on board, which he seemed to think might be the Case with these, and apprehended they would be too much crowded, if confined to one Ton to each Man only : I explained to him the Man-

ner in which they were fitted, and told him of the Addition proposed to be made, which seemed to satisfy him entirely : I also proposed to Sir *John* to turn the prosperous *Amelia* into a Foot-Ship, and to stow the Fascines, &c. in the Holds of the Hospital Ships, which he also approved on : I have writ to the Navy-Board, and desired they would send an Express to *Deal* (in case the Transports are detained by the Wind there) to order her to be fitted accordingly, which may be easily done even on the Passage here, by the Assistance of the Carpenters of the Men of War that come round with them, if their Lordships please to give the Commanding Officer Orders for that Purpose. This Ship has only fourteen Days Provisions on board for four hundred Men ; I propose putting only two hundred on board of her, that I may by that Means still reserve some Room in her Hold, in case there should be more Fascines, &c. than the Hospital Ships will conveniently take in, and have desired that one Month's more Provisions for two hundred Men may be immediately put on board her, where she is ; but in case that is not accomplished before she arrives here, it shall be ready to be sent on board from hence on their appearing.

I have received your's of the 21<sup>st</sup>. by the Messenger, with their Lordship's Directions. I shall immediately fit the *Jason*, which, with the Tonnage I have got here and the Tenders, I think I can venture to assure their Lordships will remove all the Difficulties I found here, without the *Chesterfield*. Their Lordships may depend on my doing every Thing in my Power to forward this Service, and don't doubt but I shall have all in such Readiness as not to run the least Risque of a Delay, when the Transports from the Eastward come round. I am disappointed in the Ships I mentioned in my Letter last Night to Lord *Anson* from the *Mother-Bank*, and also in one out of this Harbour ; but with the Tenders that I am fitting, I shall have enough to quiet the Minds of all. It blew so excessively hard Yesterday, that I did not get back from the *Isle*  
of

*of Night before Ten at Night, which is the Reason I could not dispatch the Messenger till this Morning.*

I am, &c.

GEO. COCKBURN.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XXIV. *Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Hawke to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Portsmouth, August 25th, 1757.*

SIR,

I AM honoured with your Letter of the 23d Instant. As a Number of Transports more have been taken up at this Port by the Comptroller of the Navy, and the *Jason* Ship of War is fitted for the Reception of Soldiers; I hope there will be no Occasion to put any on board the Ships of War, which are already sufficiently weakened, by having two Battalions of raw undisciplined Men in their Complements; but in case the Transports should not be sufficient for the Number of Troops, I shall, in Obedience to his Majesty's Commands, accommodate the Remainder on board the Men of War.

I am, with the greatest Respect,

ED. HAWKE.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XXV. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt to Sir Edward Hawke, and Sir John Mordaunt, dated Whitehall, September 5th, 1757, Four o'Clock in the Afternoon.*

SIR,

THE Wind having been fair for the Transports going to *Spithead*, ever since *Friday Morning*, I am to acquaint you, that his Majesty expects, with Impatience, to hear that the Troops are embarked; but if, by any Delay, the Embarkation should not be compleated, when this Letter reaches you, I am to signify to you the King's Pleasure, that the most particular Diligence be employed in getting the Troops on board, and proceeding without the Loss of a Moment

ment to the Execution of your Orders and Instructions, with regard to the Expedition under your Care.

His Majesty being informed that ten Battalions, under the Orders of Sir *John Ligonier*, were all compleatly embarked at *Williamstadt* within the Course of twenty-four Hours, in which they arrived at that Place; the King expects to hear, by the Return of this Messenger, that the Fleet

To Sir *John Mordaunt*,  
with the Troops under  
your Command on board. under your Command with the  
Troops on board; have proceeded  
to Sea, in case the Wind permits, agreeable to your Orders and Instructions.

I am, &c.

To Sir *Edward Hawke*.

W. PITT.

P. S. The Messenger that carries this has my Orders to stay to bring an Account of the Fleet's Sailing.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XXVI. Copy of a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Ramilies at Spithead*, September 6th, 1757.

SIR,

AT half past five this Morning I received, by Express, your Letter of the 5th Instant, signifying his Majesty's Directions to use the utmost Diligence in embarking the Troops, and getting to Sea.

As I could not doubt of my Letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty, by Express on Sunday Morning, being immediately communicated to you, I should have expected, that before your's was sent, his Majesty would have been fully satisfied that I needed no Spur in the Execution of his Orders.

As the Wind was fair here on Saturday, I ordered an Officer with six Cutters out to cruize for the Transports, with positive Directions not to come to at *Spithead*, but proceed directly to *Cowes*. Soon after they appeared in Sight on Sunday Morning, I dispatched an Officer to acquaint Sir *John Mordaunt*, with their Arrival,

rival, that every Thing might be ready. As there was but little Wind all Day on *Sunday*, but few of them reached *Cowes* that Night, and proving but little Wind on *Monday* Morning, I sent Boats to tow the *Jason* down, with two Boats from each Ship at *Spithead*, together with all the Boats from the Dock, and the six Cutters to assist in the Embarkation. One Brigade was embarked Yesterday, as the other will be by Noon To-day ; so that the whole Time taken up in the Embarkation, from the Arrival of the Transports to this Day at Noon, will not exceed twenty-four Hours, tho' we have not the Advantage of Jetty Heads, from whence the Troops could step into the Transports.

Beside, Sir, as they were detained so long in their Passage round, they were in Want of considerable Quantities of Provisions, which to save Time I sent to *Cowes* after them, while I watered, and victualled the Ordnance, and Horse-ships here ; the Horse are embarked this Morning.

Give me Leave to add, that the Mortar was to be shipped on board the *Infernal* Bomb Vessel ; she will be ready To-night ; the Men of War which came round with them, were also in Want of Stores and some Provisions.

The Squadron is now unmooring, and I only wait the Return of the Transports to *Spithead*, when I shall take the first Wind that offers to go to *St. Helens*, and if it should prove favourable shall go to Sea immediately after.

Be so kind, Sir, as to take the Trouble to assure his Majesty, that as I ever have, so more particularly on this Occasion, I shall shew the greatest Regard to his Orders.

I am, &c.

ED. HAWKE.

A true Copy, Robert Wood.

Numb.

Numb. XXVII. *Copy of a Letter from Sir John Mordaunt to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Portsmouth, September 6th, Nine at Night.*

SIR,

**I** Had this Morning the Honour of your's of the 5th Instant, and can assure you, that not a Minute's Time has been lost in embarking the Troops.

Though the first of the Transports did not arrive at *Cowes* 'till *Sunday* Evening, we began the Embarkation at Day-break the next Morning, and continued putting the Troops on board 'till after it was dark. We have followed the same Method To-day, and by that Means I have now the Pleasure to acquaint you, that I finished the Embarkation of the last Regiment at about six this Evening.

I beg you will do me the Favour, to mention to his Majesty, that we were obliged to march the Troops and Baggage five Miles to the Place of Embarkation, and that we were then forced to put the Men in small Boats, in which they were rowed above a Mile before they could embark in the Transports; whereas at *Williamstadt* the Troops marched directly from the Quay into the Transports, without the least Possibility of a Delay.

It is both my Duty and the Pride of my Heart, to execute with the utmost Dispatch and Diligence the Orders his Majesty has honoured me with, and I flatter myself a very short Time will now shew it.

I am, &c.

J. MORDAUNT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XXVIII. *Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Hawke to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Ramilies at St. Helens, September 8th, 1757.*

SIR,

**A** Calm obliged me on *Tuesday* to moor the Squadron again; Yesterday at four in the Morning I began to unmoor again, and sent an Officer to *Cowes*, to see none of the Transports were left behind. About

G

three

three in the Afternoon I got to this Place, and was obliged to come to, as they could not get out, dispatching Officers, who were all Night employed in ordering them to join me without Loss of Time.

Last Night arrived from the *Downs*, a Company of Lord *Effingham's* Regiment, which had been embarked on board the *Norwich* at *Chatham*.

The Transports are all come down, and I am now under Way, with a moderate Breeze at E. N. E.

I am, &c.

E. HAWKE.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XXIX. Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Hawke to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Ramilies at Sea, September 10th, 1757.

SIR,

ON Thursday last, after I wrote to you, the Wind died away, which obliged me to come to again, till half an hour past Five: then a moderate Breeze about W. N. W. springing up, I made the Signal to weigh, and at Seven made Sail with all the Transports. On Friday we had contrary Winds till Evening, and this Morning I was joined by his Majesty's Ship *Essex*, by whom I send this. We have now a fresh Gale, with the Wind at N. N. E. *Portland* bears N. E. 11 Leagues. I am, &c.

ED. HAWKE.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XXX. Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt to Sir Edward Hawke and Sir John Mordaunt, dated September 15th, 1757, by the Viper Sloop.

Sir Edward Hawke, and like Letter, *mutatis mutandis*, to Sir John Mordaunt.

SIR,

Whitehall, Sept. 15th, 1757.

HIS Majesty, by his secret Instructions, dated the 5th Day of August last, having directed the Return of the Fleet under your Command, together with the Land Forces on board, "so as be in England at or about, as

"near

*Forces  
and  
Ships.*

“ near as may be, the End of *September*, unless the Circumstances of the *Ships and Forces* shall necessarily require their Return sooner :” I am now to signify to you the King’s Pleasure, that you do not consider the above-mentioned Time, limited for your Return, as intended, in any Manner, to affect or interfere with the full Execution of the first and principal Object of the Expedition, namely, “ Attempting, as far as shall be found practicable, a Descent on the *French Coast*, at or near *Roche fort*, in order to attack, if practicable, and, by a vigorous Impression, force that Place ; and to burn and destroy, to the utmost of your Power, all Shipping, Docks, Magazines, and Arsenals, that shall be found there, and exert such other Efforts as shall be judged most proper for annoying the Enemy.” And with regard to any other particular Attempt, which, agreeably to your Orders, you shall have commenced, and in the Execution whereof you shall be actually engaged, it is also his Majesty’s Pleasure, that you do not desist from, or break up the same, merely and solely on account of the Time limited for your Return by the Instructions abovementioned, but that, notwithstanding the same, you do continue with the *Troops. Fleet*, during such a farther Number of Days, as may afford a competent Time for the Completion of any Operation under the above Circumstances : After which you are to take care to return with the *Fleet* under your *Forces. Fleet.* Command, and the *Forces on board*, in the Manner directed by your former Instructions. I am, &c.

W. PITT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.



Numb. XXXI. *Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Hawke to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Ramilies, in Basque-Road, Sept. 30th, 1757.*

SIR,

**A**BOUT Seven o'Clock in the Evening of the 22d Instant, as I was standing in between the Islands of *Ré* and *Oleron* for *Basque-Road*, I received his Majesty's Orders, signified in your Letter of the 15th Instant by the *Viper*. Having before made the Disposition for attacking the Isle of *Aix* (a Step, in the general Opinion, necessary for securing the landing of the Troops), at 10 in the Morning of the 23d, the Vice-Admiral, by my Order, weighed with the Tide of Flood, and stood towards it with his Division, composed of the *Magnanime*, *Barfleur*, *Neptune*, *Torbay*, and *Royal William*, Frigates, Bomb-vessels, Fireships, and Cutters. The *Magnanime* led: About Twelve the Fire began from the Fort with Shells and great Guns, and continued while our Ships approached, till about ten Minutes after One; when the *Magnanime* brought up within less than forty Yards of the Fort, where she kept an incessant Fire for about thirty-five Minutes; as did the *Barfleur*, which brought up, about five Minutes after her, a-breast of the Fort. About three Quarters after One the Firing ceased, the Garrison having struck their Colours and surrendered. They had in the Fort eight Mortars of about 14 Inches Diameter, and thirty Guns; sixteen of which were eighteen, and the Remainder about fourteen Pounds. The *Magnanime*, tho' damaged in her Rigging, Yards, and Masts, yet had only two Soldiers killed, and eleven Men wounded. Of the Garrison, which consisted of near six hundred Seamen and Soldiers, only one was killed, and seven or eight wounded.

On the Morning of the 23d, I observed a *French* Man of War, over the Land, to the S. E. of the Isle of *Aix*. Being desirous of destroying her, I directed Capt. *Byron*, of the *America*, to take with him the  
*Achilles*

*Achilles* and *Pluto* Fireships, and, as soon as the Red Division should begin to batter, go and destroy her. But the *French* flung their Guns overboard, cut their Cables, and otherwise lightening her, run up the *Charente*. It is said she was the *Prudent* of 74 Guns, bound for *Louisbourg*.

It having been thought necessary, in order to secure a safe Landing for the Troops, to sound and reconnoitre the Shore of the Main, as soon as the Fort had surrendered, I directed Rear-Admiral *Brodrick*, with Captains *Denis*, *Douglas*, and *Buckle*, to perform that Service, and make their Report to me. It was the Afternoon of the 24th before they returned: A Copy of that Report accompanies this. After maturely considering it; I was of Opinion they might land; on which Sir *John Mordaunt* desired a Council of War might be assembled to consider of it. There it was granted by every body, that the Landing could be effected. In Confidence of their Judgment, and Knowledge of their own Profession, we assented to their Reasons for not proceeding to attempt taking *Rochefort* by Escalade. A Copy of the Result of that Council of War is here inclosed. He desired a second, which was assembled early on the Morning of the 28th: Herewith I send you the Result of it. Immediately the Disposition was made for the Landing, under the Direction of Rear-Admiral *Brodrick*, and all the Captains of the Squadron. Part of the Troops were actually in the Boats, when I received a Letter from Mr. *Brodrick*, a Copy whereof I herewith transmit.

Last Night I applied to him, to know whether the General Officers of the Land Forces had any farther military Operations to propose, that I might not unnecessarily detain the Squadron here. This Morning I received Sir *John's* Answer, a Copy of which is here inclosed. It was the daily Expectation of their undertaking something, which induced me to stay here so long. As I have now got their final Resolution, I shall sail for *England* To-morrow Morning.

Though, before I came here, this Place was represented as very difficult of Access, and so narrow that Ships could not lye in Safety from the Forts, nay, the Pilots made many Baulks before we came in; yet I find it a safe spacious Road, in which all the Navy of *England*, Merchant-ships included, may ride without the least Annoyance; and that a Squadron may, at any time, by laying here, prevent any Armament from *Rockefort*, and ruin all the *French* Trade to *Rbé*, *Oleron*, or the Continent, within these Islands.

I beg Leave to assure you, Sir, I have discharged my Duty to my King and Country with Fidelity, Diligence, and Integrity, and wish more could have been done for the Good of the Service.

The Pilot of the *Magnanime* has behaved like a Man of Bravery and Skill, and as such I beg Leave to recommend him to you.

I am, &c.

ED. HAWKE.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XXXII. *Copy of a Report made to Sir Edward Hawke on board the Ramilies, Sept. 24th, 1757, by Rear-Admiral Brodrick, and others, inclosed in Sir Edward Hawke's Letter to Mr. Secretary Pitt, of the 30th September, 1757.*

In Pursuance of an Order from Sir *Edward Hawke*, Knight of the Bath, Admiral of the Blue Squadron of his Majesty's Fleet, &c. dated the 23d Sept. 1757,

**W**E the underwritten went and sounded the *French* Shore from *Rochelle* to *Fort Fouras*, and find as follows:

From the south Point of the Entrance of *Rochelle* (on which Point there are 27 Guns mounted on *Barbett*) to the Point of the *Angolin*, we find it a rocky Shore,

Shore, and steep Cliffs, with Shoals near two Miles off: From *Angolin* to *Cbatiliallon*, we find a fair hard sandy Beech, with a Flat lying off near two Miles, having but three Fathom at high Water at that Distance, but clear Ground; along which Beech are Sand-hills, about fifty Yards from the Top of high Water: On the Point of *Cbatiliallon* are two Guns on Barbett, which can no ways annoy the landing of the Troops in the Bays of either Side of it; and off which Point runs a Riff of Rocks west two Miles, which are dry at low Water; and round the said Point, about half a Mile to the Eastward, there is a small sandy Bay, near half a Mile long; and the Land over the said Bay rises with an easy Ascent, about a Quarter of a Mile, to a Church or Convent, with a few Houses near it. From the sandy Bay, along to a square Fort on the south Part of the Bay, lies a long flat Mud, which is dry near two Miles at low Water.

It is our general Opinion, the Transports cannot come nearer to either of the foresaid Bays (in order to land Troops) than a Mile and a half, as we found three Fathoms only at that Distance at high Water.

The square Fort on the south Side of the Bay, we could only see two Sides of: The Face to the North-west had nine Embrazures, and that to the North-east only two.

Given under our Hands on board his Majesty's  
Ship *Ramilies* in *Basque-Road*, this 24 Sept. 1757.

THO. BRODRICK,  
JAMES DOUGLAS,  
PET. DENIS,  
MATT. BUCKLE.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XXXIII. *Copy of a Council of War held on board the Neptune, Sept. 25th, 1757, inclosed in Sir Edward Hawke's Letter to Mr. Secretary Pitt of the 30th Septemb. 1757; the same as the Original delivered by Sir John Mordaunt, soon after his Arrival, to Mr. Secretary Pitt.*

*At a Council of War held on board his Majesty's Ship Neptune, at Anchor off the Isle of Aix, Sept. 25, 1757.*

P R E S E N T,

Sir *Edward Hawke*, Knight of the Bath, Admiral and Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Ships employed in the present Expedition.

Sir *John Mordaunt*, Knight of the Bath, Lieutenant-General of his Majesty's Forces, and General and Commander in Chief of the Troops on the present Expedition.

*Charles Knowles*, Esq; Vice-Admiral of the Red.

The Right Hon. Major-General *Henry Seymour Conway*.  
*Thomas Brodrick*, Esq; Rear-Admiral of the White.

Hon. Major-General *Edward Cornwallis*.

Captain *George Bridges Rodney*.

Colonel *George Howard*.

THE Fortifications and Island of *Aix*, belonging to the *French* King, having surrendered to his Majesty's Arms, the Council proceeded to take into Consideration the farther Steps proper to be taken, in Execution of his Majesty's secret Instructions to Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt*, Commanders in Chief of his Majesty's Forces on the present Expedition; and the first Object being to determine, whether a proper Place could be found for landing the Troops, Sir *Edward Hawke* produced a Report by Rear-Admiral *Brodrick*, and the Captains *Douglas*, *Denis*, and *Buckle*, whom he had sent to sound and reconnoitre the Coast, from *La Rochelle* to the Point of *Fouras*, near the Embouchure of the River *Charente*, which Report is hereunto annexed.

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The Council having taken the said Report into Consideration, and examined the Pilots, it appears that there are but two Landing-places; and that the Troops could not be reimbarbed from either of them in bad Weather, the Swell of the Sea making so great a Surf on the Shore, that no Boats would be able to approach it to take the Troops off; (the ablest Pilot having informed the Council, that he had been at Anchor seven Weeks in this Road, and not a Boat been able to pass or repass.) And it likewise appears to the Council, that in case the Troops should be overpowered by superior Numbers of the Enemy, they could have no Protection from the Cannon of the Fleet, the shoal Water preventing their coming within Gun-shot.

The Probability of Success in the Attempt against *Rochefort*, in case the Landing was effected, being then taken into Consideration, Lieutenant-Colonel *Clarke*, chief Engineer, was called in; and being asked his Opinion, declared, That when he saw the Place in the Year 1754, he thought no Place was more capable of being taken by Assault; what Alteration may have been made in the Place since, he has not sufficient Information to judge: That he does not imagine any regular Attack was intended against that or any other Place, the small Quantity of Artillery we have not being sent on that Plan. Being asked, if the Ditch were flowed with Water, whether he should then think it practicable to take the Place by Escalade, said, he thought not; but that when he saw the Ditch, it did not appear to him capable of being flowed.

Monsi. *de Bonneville*, Volunteer, being asked what he knew of *Rochefort*, said, that he was there about nine Years ago; that the Ramparts were of Earth, and that there are Sluices there, by which they can flow the Ditch, and that it was full of Water all round when he was there.

The Pilot of the *Neptune* being called in, said, that he had been very frequently at *Rochefort*; that he  
com-

commanded a small Vessel there many Years; that they have Sluices near the Hospital, by which they can fill the Ditch with Water; that they raise them sometimes to cleanse the Ditch, and that he has seen Water in it quite round the Town.

The Informations of some *French* Prisoners were then produced, confirming the same; as also, that they had been working on the Fortifications there for some time past.

The Intelligence received from several neutral Vessels, spoke with on the Passage, was also produced, declaring, that the *French* had been for some time in Expectation of a Descent from the *English* in those Parts: All which being taken into Consideration, together with the long Detention of the Troops in the Isle of *Wight*, and our meeting with contrary Winds, Fogs, and Calms, upon our Passage; the several Informations received of Troops assembled in the Neighbourhood, and the great Improbability of finding the Place unprovided, or of surprising it, or consequently succeeding in an Enterprize founded on the Plan of an Assault or Escalade merely, and the Uncertainty of a secure Retreat for the Troops, if landed; the Council are unanimously of Opinion, that such an Attempt is neither advisable nor practicable.

EDWARD HAWKE,  
J. MORDAUNT,  
CHARLES KNOWLES,  
H. SEYMOUR CONWAY,  
THOMAS BRODRICK,  
EDWARD CORNWALLIS,  
G. B. RODNEY,  
G. HOWARD.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb.

Numb. XXXIV. *Copy of a Council of War held on board the Ramilies, Sept. 28th, 1757, inclosed in Sir Edward Hawke's Letter to Mr. Secretary Pitt, of the 30th Sept. 1757; the same as the Original delivered by Sir John Mordaunt, soon after his Arrival, to Mr. Secretary Pitt.*

*At a Council of War held on board his Majesty's Ship Ramilies, in Basque-Road, this 28th Sept. 1757.*

P R E S E N T,

*Sir Edward Hawke*, Knight of the Bath, Admiral and Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Ships employed on the present Expedition.

*Sir John Mordaunt*, Knight of the Bath, Lieutenant-General of his Majesty's Forces, and Commander in Chief of the Troops employed on the present Expedition.

*Charles Knowles*, Esq; Vice-Admiral of the Red.

The Right Hon. Major-General *Henry Seymour Conway*.

*Thomas Brodrick*, Esq; Rear-Admiral of the White.

Hon. Major-General *Edward Cornwallis*.

*Captain George Bridges Rodney*.

*Colonel George Howard*.

THE Council of War being assembled, at the Desire of *Sir John Mordaunt*, proceeded to take under Consideration, whether it is advisable to land the Troops, to attack the Forts leading to and upon the Mouth of the River *Charente*; and after mature Deliberation are unanimously of Opinion, that it is advisable to land the Troops for that Purpose, with all possible Dispatch.

ED. HAWKE,

J. MORDAUNT,

CHA. KNOWLES,

H. SEYMOUR CONWAY,

THO. BRODRICK,

ED. CORNWALLIS,

A true Copy. Robert Wood,

GEO. BRIDGES RODNEY,

G. HOWARD.

Nur<sup>t</sup>



agreed it would be six Hours before that Body of Troops could be supported by the Landing of a second Embarkation: Add to this, that the Ships could not come near enough to help to cover the Landing, and the Garrison of *Rachelle* was within two Leagues.

Under these Circumstances, and the strong Representation of the Sea-Officers, the General Officers unanimously agreed to send the Troops back again to their Transports.

The Wind being fair, and the Works near blown up, I had next Morning a Note from Sir *Edward Hawke*, letting me know, that if the General Officers had no further military Operations to propose, considerable enough to authorise his detaining the Squadron longer here, he intended to proceed with it to *England*, without Loss of Time. I communicated this Note to the Land-Officers that composed our Councils of War; and, upon weighing every Circumstance, we all agreed to return to *England*.

I greatly grieve that I must report to his Majesty, that so fine a Body of Troops has done nothing. But I am not conscious that any commanding Officer (however more able than myself) could have done more under our Circumstances. I am, &c.

J. MORDAUNT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood..

Numb.

sure, into his Majesty's Orders, in regard to the Time of our returning to England.

We took *l'Isle de Aix* on the 23d; and as Sir *Edward Hawke* will send a particular Account of the Affair, I shall trouble you with very few Words on that Head.

When Vice-Admiral *Knowles* was sent with his Division to attack the Fort, I sent Major-General *Conway* with the *Buffs*, *Bentinck's*, and the *King's* Regiments, to be ready to land, whenever the Admiral thought it might be of any Use:

The Fort did not hold out above half an Hour after Capt. *Howe* had given his first Broadside, which he did not do till he was within fifty Yards of it.

I am quite unhappy that the great national Object, the taking of *Roche fort*, was not at this Period practicable; and what adds to my Unhappiness is, that the King so strongly ordered it. But when his Majesty reads the particular Events and Circumstances, which are strictly stated in the Council of War, I flatter myself he will not be dissatisfied with our Proceedings.

Whilst the Fortifications of the Fort on the *Isle d'Aix* were blowing up, we thought it right to make some Attempt, and agreed on Landing and Attacking the Forts leading to and upon the River *Charente*. Orders were accordingly given on the 28th, for our landing the same Night with the whole Army. At One in the Morning, Rear-Admiral *Broderick*, with most of the Captains, and all the Sea-Officers of every Kind, with all the Boats that could be got, were ready to assist, and most of the Troops for the first Embarkation were on board; unfortunately, such a high Wind sprung up from the Shore, that all the Sea-Officers gave their Opinion that the Landing should not be attempted: That the Boats must be towed so very slowly; the Transport Boats, by Reports to me, could not some of them make any Way at all; That it would be Day-light before the first Embarkation could possibly be landed; and all agreed

there was no Ditch, when he saw it three Years ago : That it had twenty-four Pieces of Cannon, mounted towards the Sea, and Embrazures for Guns towards the Land : That Fort *la Pointe* is like *Fcuras*, circular, and has twenty-two Pieces of Cannon ; on the East Side, towards the Land, it has a Wall like that of *Fouras* : That the Landing in the Bay of *Cbate-laillon* is the best Landing of any Place here ; and that when landed, and you get upon the *Rochefort* Road, it is a fine open Country : “ That on *Friday* “ Morning of the 23d Instant, he was in Fort *Fou-* “ *ras* ; that there was but twenty-two or twenty-four “ Guns in it, and not above fifty Men of all Kinds : “ That there are much about the same Number of “ Guns in Fort *la Pointe* ; and that both Forts are “ inclosed by a Wall, in much the same manner to- “ wards the Land.”

The Council having maturely considered the Evidence, Sir *John Mordaunt* declared he was of Opinion, that something further should be attempted, and that he would give his Orders accordingly that Moment, if any, meaning the General Officers of the Troops, would say it was adviseable.—Vice-Admiral *Knowles* declared he had received great Light from the Persons examined, and therefore thought something ought to be attempted.

Major-General *Conway* declared for the Attempt, merely from his own Opinion, without Regard to the Evidences.

Sir *Edward Hawke*, appealing to every Member of the Council for the Truth of what he said, declared, that he was now of the same Opinion, which he had given both before and at the Council of War of the 25th, that the Landing could be effected : That the Troops ought to be landed for some farther Attempt, which was alone Matter of Consideration with the General Officers of the Troops, he, not taking upon him to be a Judge of Land Operations, but would, from his Confidence in their Abilities and Skill in their own Profession, readily assent to any Resolution they

they should come to, and assist them to the utmost of his Power. This being settled, after some Debate, Sir *John Mordaunt*, Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, Rear-Admiral *Brodrick*, and Captain *Rodney*, withdrew.

The Council of War being re-assembled, and the Question put,

Whether it is adviseable to land the Troops, to attack the Forts leading to and upon the Mouth of the River *Charente*?

Y E S.

Col. *George Howard*,  
Capt. *Geo. Bridges Rodney*,  
Rear-Admiral *Brodrick*,  
Right Hon. *Hen. Seymour Conway*,  
Vice-Admiral *Knowles*,  
Sir *John Mordaunt*,  
Sir *Edward Hawke*,

N O.

Hon. Major-General *Edward Cornwallis*; but afterwards acquiesced with the Majority.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XXXIX. Copy of a Letter from Sir John Mordaunt to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Ramilies, Oct. 4, 1757.

S I R,

I Have the Honour to inform you, that we are now got into the Channel; and, as it is doubtful how long we may be before we reach *Portsmouth*, as the Wind now stands, I think it my Duty to trouble you with this Express.

I must beg the Favour to know his Majesty's Orders in Regard to the Destination and Quartering of the Troops. I must also desire Orders, whether I am to stay at *Portsmouth* till the Troops have all marched out of that Town, or, whether upon Landing, I am immediately to come to *London*, and make my Report to his Majesty, and leave the Disembarking and Marching of the Regiments to the two Major-Generals.

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As the Resolution to sail for *England*, and the Dispatch of the Express to you, were of the same Day, I flatter myself you will make Allowances for the Hurry I was in, and excuse the Inaccuracies in the Letter I had the Honour to send to you, dated the 30th of *September*; in looking over the Copy of it, I see I have not stated, in a clear Light, the Article relating to the Gentlemen of the Sea Service; and I think it my Duty to explain, that after our talking over the Affair together, it was the General Officers saying it would be necessary to land before Day, that occasioned the Gentlemen of the Sea Service to advise against the attempting it that Morning.

I cannot help repeating my Concern that the Affair of *Rockefort* did not succeed, and I shall be doubly unhappy, if, upon reading the Council of War, you do not think we acted right. I am, &c.

J. MORDAUNT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XL. *Copy of a Letter from Sir John Mordaunt to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Portsmouth, Oct. 6, 1757.*

S I R,

I Think it my Duty to inform you, by my Aid de Camp, that the Fleet came to an Anchor this Evening at *St. Helen's*, and that most of the Transports are already got to *Spithead*.

As it will be of the greatest Advantage to the Troops to disembark soon; and as I am doubtful whether or not the Letter I had the Honour to send you, by a Ship ordered to *Plymouth*, to be forwarded by Express, can have so soon come to your Hands, I think it my Duty to send you a Duplicate of it.

I must keep the Troops on board, till I receive his Majesty's further Commands; and am, &c.

J. MORDAUNT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb.

Numb. XLI. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt to Sir Edward Hawke, dated Oct. 7, 1757.*

SIR,

**Y**esterday Morning I received the Favour of your Letter of the 30th past, which was immediately laid before the King; and having this Day had an Account from Sir *John Mordaunt*, that the Troops are arrived at *Portsmouth*, I am commanded to signify to you his Majesty's Pleasure, that you do give immediate Orders for Disembarking at *Southampton* the five following Battalions, *viz.* the Earl of *Home's*, Lord *George Bentinck's*, first Battalion of Lieutenant-General *Wolfe's*, first Battalion of Colonel *Kingsley's*, and first Battalion of Colonel *Howard's*; and that the five other Battalions; *viz.* the Earl of *Loudoun's*, Colonel *Amberst's*, Colonel *Hodgson's*, Colonel *Brudenel's*, and the first Battalion of Major-General *Cornwallis's*, be disembarked at *Portsmouth*. With Regard to the two Battalions of Lieutenant-General *Stuart's* and Earl of *Effingham's*, which have served on board the Fleet, it is the King's Pleasure, that they be disembarked at *Portsmouth* or *Gatham*, according as the Men of War may be ordered to either of those Places. I am, &c.

W. PITT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

Numb. XLII. *Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary Pitt to Sir John Mordaunt, dated Oct. 7, 1757.*

SIR,

**Y**esterday Morning I received the Favour of your Letter of the 30th past, and this Morning that dated the 4th Instant, in the Channel; and, at One o'Clock this Afternoon, I was also favoured with one of the 6th Instant, by your Aid de Camp, from *Portsmouth*: All which were immediately laid before the King. And I am to acquaint you, that his Majesty is pleased to permit you to return to *London* immediately, in order to make a Report of your Proceedings, leaving at *Portsmouth* one of the Major-Generals,

to

to superintend the Disembarkation of the Troops; and the King is pleased to leave it to you to appoint, which of the two Major-Generals you shall judge most proper for that Service; the other being at Liberty to return to *London* with you. I am, &c. W. PITT.

*P. S.* I send you inclosed a Copy of a Letter I have wrote to Sir *Edward Hawke*, by which you will see the Orders his Majesty has thought proper to give him for disembarking the Troops. You will acquaint the Major-General, whom you shall leave to superintend the Disembarkation, that he may return to *London*, as soon as that Service shall be completed.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XLIII. *Copy of a Letter from Sir Edward Hawke to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Ramilies at Spithead, Oct. 8, 1757, 1 P. M.*

S I R,

I Have the Honour of your Letter of Yesterday's Date, signifying his Majesty's Orders for the Disembarkation of the Troops. As I have Permission to come to *London*, I have directed Vice-Admiral *Knowles* to put these Orders in Execution as soon as the Weather will permit, it blowing very hard at present. I am, &c. ED. HAWKE.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

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Numb. XLIV. *Copy of a Letter from Sir John Mordaunt to Mr. Secretary Pitt, dated Portsmouth, Oct. 8, 1757.*

S I R,

I Had this Morning the Honour of your Letter; and, in consequence of it, shall set out for *London* To-morrow Morning early, and propose myself the Pleasure of paying my Respects to you on *Monday* Morning. I am, &c. J. MORDAUNT.

A true Copy. Robert Wood.

F I N I S.

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[COX, HENRY]

**C A N D I D**  
**REFLECTIONS**  
**ON THE**  
**R E P O R T**

(AS PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY)

OF THE  
**GENERAL-OFFICERS,**

Appointed by his MAJESTY'S Warrant of the  
First of November last, to enquire into the  
CAUSES of the FAILURE of the late Expedition  
to the Coasts of FRANCE.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND in the Country.

——— *Non, si quid turbida Roma*  
*Elevet, accedas, examine improbum in illa,*  
*Castiges trutina.* PERS.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for S. HOOPER and A. MORLEY at Gay's-Head,  
near Beaufort-Buildings in the Strand. MDCCVIII.

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REFLECTIONS

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REPORT of the General Officers, &c.

S I R,

**A**FTER your having all along expressed so great a curiosity for knowing what passed here, with respect to the consequences of the failure of our expedition, I cannot be surprised that, on receiving the Enquiry thereon, published by authority, you should desire to have some further explanations, to clear up what may be still left obscure, or whereon to ground your conjectures of any ulterior procedure therein. Willing as I am to oblige, and at the same time not to deceive you, I can only assure you, that you may depend on nothing but the most exact truth in any communication of mine, so far as I

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am capable of attaining or comprehending it. No falshood of fact or inference will you find, that may be a reproach to my profession of candor, however it may be one to my judgment or information; for neither of which I can pretend to answer.

I need not tell you with what eagerness and satisfaction the public received his majesty's most gracious declaration of his intentions, that a faithful enquiry should be made into the causes of the failure of an expedition, prepared with so much ostentation of force, whilst its destination was kept so profound a secret, and on which the perhaps over-raised expectation of many seemed to rest the very issue of the war.

But though the specific place on which the storm was designed to burst was not known, at least to the public here; yet it was long enough beforehand pretty clear, from many indications, that whatever it was, it must lie on the western coast of France, from Calais to Bayonne inclusively. This foreknowledge then, would doubtless induce the French to give orders for guarding, in the best manner that could be, the whole extent of the threatened country, and each particular place of it liable to insult, in a lesser or greater degree, according to the apprehensions reasonable to be respectively entertained for it.

To

To say the truth, Rochefort, the very place which, from its situation, seemed the least to invite an attack, was consequently the most neglected by the French in their plan of defence, and therefore bid the fairest for success against it, in case of its being practicable to penetrate with a body of troops, so far as to get before it; whilst the dispersion of their forces, stationed either in the places judged more obvious to insult, or within reach to succour them, should give our's the fairer play for carrying it by surprize. Considering however its importance, especially in point of its being one of the principal ports of equipment, implying in course its containing docks, stores, arsenals, and shipping, the destroying of which would be cutting the very sinews of their marine-force, which must make it the more a national object for us to attempt; it cannot, reconcileably to common sense, be imagined they would intirely leave it out of their general plan of defence. They might not indeed do all that would have been done to put it into a condition of not fearing an insult, if they had feared one; but they undoubtedly made some dispositions against a contingency, which if not probable, was not however impossible; or, no doubt, the great wisdom of our government would not have pitched upon it for its object.

Besides, that in all enterprizes, especially meant for bold ones, all the objections, which it is so right to weigh and consider, are, for all that, not to be slighted, on sufficient motives to out-balance them; amongst which not the least is that axiom of marshal Turenne's in war, That one is not always to suppose an enemy will do all that he might do. The point is to weigh resolutions maturely; but when taken, to execute them with constancy and intrepidity. Whether then the expedition, now under consideration, was defective in the projection or in the execution, stood the matter of a fair enquiry. But as the decision on the execution, by such an enquiry, naturally and ultimately includes the judgment to be formed on the projection of the enterprize, the failure of it was not without propriety, made by his majesty's orders, specifically the object of examination.

But before I take notice to you of the report of the commissioners on that enquiry, I shall observe to you the state of the public opinion on the disgraceful return of so powerful an armament, without effecting any thing answerable to the hopes or designs of its outset.

The greater part of the nation, with the best of meanings to its honour and interest, in the heat of its resentment for disappointed  
expecta-

expectations, took the readiest objects to vent it on, the commanders on this unsuccessful expedition. Another part, and by far the least numerous one, though equally well-meaning, remounted higher, to the plan of projection itself; and doing justice to the goodness of its intentions, doubted at least of there having been sufficient grounds of knowledge or information to have warranted the undertaking.

Some, merely guided by private attachments, or prejudices in favour of the projectors, or at least of the principal promoter of this attempt, extolled it to the skies, admired the activity of the new m—n—r, that made so glorious a contrast for him to the past indolence and inaction of his predecessors; not without throwing out shrewd hints of the envy of some who had opposed his rise to power, having been carried to such treasonable lengths, as secretly to have thwarted and countermined his operations. On the other hand, others, perhaps influenced by considerations of the like private nature, by pique, prejudice, or even that envy of which they were accused, treated, or affected to treat, the whole plan as chimerical, crude, and indigested, both in the projection and appointment of the execution, from which no better nor other success could be expected than what befel it; that the whole



whole of it was the scheme of a man, who wanted to value himself upon what he did not understand, and rather than do nothing, with which he had so often reproached others, would do something that, he could have no just reason to imagine, would not be infinitely worse than nothing. For which of these two opinions was the least unjust, I not only refer you to the facts and testimonials that appear in the course of the enquiry, but to that knowledge of the local position of things, where the attack was levelled, which you either have, or may so easily come at.

It is also not unworthy of remark to you, and what you will easily believe, that the loudest declaimers against the commanders of the expedition on their return, for their tenderness to their persons, their declining of danger, and the timidity of their councils, were to be found precisely among the rankest cowards, or at least the most reasonably to be suspected such. You might have heard in coffee-houses, public assemblies, not excluding the highest, persons who had never seen the face of danger, nor most probably ever desired to see it, the fiercest in the condemnation of the gentlemen employed; ridiculous and contemptible however as this division of judges may be, they are always too numerous, and serve to fill the cry. On the other hand, the most truly brave and noble, who ever  
judge

judge the best, were not ashamed to own, they thought the non-protestation and concurrence of a Hawke, a Knowles, and a Broderick, (to say nothing of the military officers, as being with equally unattainted characters more personally however concerned) were a great prejudice in favour of the resolution of returning, on taking it for granted, that nothing could be done.

I shall here say nothing to you of those over-refined politicians, who pretend to discover in the combination of conjunctures, a tenderness for H—n—r, or at least a connexion with the convention of Stade, which might either occasion an armament to be sent out, by way of amusement, on an enterprise, where it was fore-known nothing could be done that might too much exasperate France to reprisals on H——r, or an intimation to be properly given, that nothing being done, would not be the most displeasing thing imaginable. Such conjectures, however countenanced by the issue itself, or by fortuitous circumstances, cannot be penetrated, at least by the public ; and, without proof, it is most certainly not only unfair, but even treasonable to insinuate them.

In one point however all ranks of people united, and that was a general dissatisfaction, at this enterprise having either been so weakly projected, as not to suffer even attempt to execute

ecute it, or at the defect of the execution itself: it is plain the fault lay somewhere, and it was natural to wish the ascertainment of, where the blame was to be imputed for a miscarriage, which, not to mention the interests of the nation, affected by the great charge to which it was put on this occasion, gave in the eyes of our enemies, and indeed of all all Europe; a kind of ridicule to our arms and councils, to which, most certainly, there before needed no addition.

The city, whose power of example has such an influence over the other towns and corporations of the kingdom, was beginning the motion, for an enquiry, which would probably have been universally followed. But to this, a stop was put by an extraordinary, but most gracious preventive message of assurance from the throne, delivered by a kind of sub-secretary, importing, that there was no occasion for its being addressed for such a measure, which was already determined, without the trouble of such an application.

Many were charmed with this unusual strain of condescension, in the court's being pleased to take notice of what was transacting in a city-assembly, and even preventing those desires, the formal expression of which, would probably have been the result of its deliberation. Some indeed, thought the step rather irregular, and that such an interference in  
mat-

matters only under consideration, could not on any pretext whatever, be either acceptable, or strictly conformable to privilege. But, waving that question as foreign to my present purpose, I shall go on to observe, that the promised enquiry was set on foot, in manner and form as you will have seen by the account published by authority.

You will naturally too have concluded, that the three great personages appointed for the examination of so important a matter, on so solemn an occasion, as giving the nation at least a preparatory satisfaction, were such as were at the head of the military profession, consummated in the art of war, and had seen a great deal of service, or at least enough of it to give abundant weight to their decision. In so concluding, you will have been in the right : to none is it unknown, how much they were so.

Yet, however authoritatively, beyond dispute *warranted* this board of enquiry was, as no accusation was formed, no charge laid ; the commander of the expedition, whom the enquiry principally affected, thought himself at liberty to call it, “ *A proceeding not quite common.*” (Enq. p. 59.) To say the truth, I am not lawyer, or versed enough in the course of practice on the like occasions, to determine whether he was in the right or wrong for making such an objection. Nei-  
C ther

ther do I pretend to give a proper name to the procedure founded upon the royal warrant : it has indeed the air of a military inquest, proceeded upon by a grand-jury of general officers. But even before a grand-jury, there must be a bill, with specification of the party charged, found for a return of *Ignoramus* or *Billa-vera* ; and surely a trial it could less be called, as there was neither arraignment of party, nor sentence, nor any thing but a bare opinion past, which has nothing of judicial in it, however greatly instructive it may be ; of which more hereafter.

Should, however, the result of this enquiry operate in the nature of a *billa vera* of a grand-jury, without the formality of a particular charge having been included in it ; certain it is, that though the commander of the expedition ought to, and probably does wish for nothing so ardently, as a regular trial proceeding upon the foundation of the report ; he will, however, be under this disadvantage, that he will have had twice to answer one and the same matter : and, that his defence will have been staled by such a pre-examination.

Now, I doubt not, Sir, but you will have perused the Enquiry with all that candor and impartiality which alone can give you a right to judge of it ; and it is in that confidence purely that I offer you such remarks as have occurred to me on it.

It

It cannot in the first place have escaped you, that all the officers of land or sea, whether witnesses or within the contingency of being parties either to a future charge, or to the blame only, unanimously agreed on supporting the expediency of returning without further attempt. Not one of them give so much as the least reason to imagine there could have been any thing done against Rochefort, circumstanced as things were, except indeed something of a tendency to such an insinuation may be gathered from the examination of colonel W--- Cl-- on whom it was more immediately a personal incumbence, to support the honor which the information he had given in of the state of Rochefort at the time he saw it, that is to say, three years before the expedition took place, had met with, in that the resolution of having that place attacked seems to have been principally founded upon it.

But before I enter upon a discussion of the motives for or against attempting a descent, it may not be superfluous to state to you some material differences between the accounts given in or believed here, and those which were circulated in Holland and other neutral parts of the continent.

You will see, especially (Enq. p. 69.) in the Memorial of the actual force of France by land, &c. the sum of it's regular troops to be under two hundred thousand: and there

seems at least to be some exactness in the calculation, as well as in the account of their destination. I am far then from calling the truth of this account in question; but so much is certain, that the French king is more generally judged to have upwards of three hundred thousand regulars in pay: and if this last state of his force is exaggerated, at least, it is very easy to know whether it is so or not. The military lists are, in France, open enough to examination, not to make it inexcusable the taking any false measures by any misrepresentation of them.

As to the militia, and especially the *gardecôtes*, as they are called, stationed along the western coast from Calais to Bayonne inclusive. You may have known it currently received here, that there were not above thirty thousand men spread along that vast extent of country, which must but thinly indeed line the coast of it. Whereas it is much more near to probability, if not to truth, what not alone the French themselves give out, but what many others acquainted with the state of that country aver, that there are above one hundred thousand militia men kept up in constant training, and have been so ever since the year 1686, now about seventy-one years, specifically along the western coast. The reasons too for keeping up such a militia are obvious; being

being designed not only as an occasional guard against any invasion, but as a nursery of soldiers ever ready to recruit their armies; the draughts for which service are immediately replaced by the generalities, according to a settled repartition, which is severely observed.

I have the more insisted on this article of the militia, because it seems contradicted by a paragraph in colonel Cl---'s letter (Enq. p. 67.) in which are the following very remarkable words.

“ By the expedition to Port L’Orient in  
 “ 1746, it appeared to me, that the country-  
 “ people in arms are very little *better* than our  
 “ own; and that an officer who *possesses* himself,  
 “ might march safely from one end of a pro-  
 “ vince to another, with only five companies  
 “ of grenadiers, where there are no regular  
 “ troops. They imagine at first, that they  
 “ can fight, and their intentions are good, till  
 “ it comes to the point, when every body  
 “ gives way almost before the firing of a pla-  
 “ toon.”

Now, whether that gentleman means by *country-people in arms*, only a sudden collectitious rabble of peasants, or the militia of the country, I cannot possibly think them in either of these constructions even so good as ours. In bravery I am sure, the common country-people of England are, at least, equal to the same class amongst the French, and in bodily strength



strength greatly their superiors; and discipline is here out of the question: so that I grant him towards his argument for placing the French in a despicable light, even more than he asks. Nor am I in the least in this partial to my own countrymen: and surely no English officer can with a very good grace, suppose his countrymen, especially the irregulars of it, inferior to the French ones; if he but recollects, that our regulars have within these few years stood in no very advantageous light of comparison with our irregulars, either within the precincts of this island, or in America. The naming of Port L'Orient seems too a little misplaced; for I do not remember that we made a very capital figure in that same expedition of ours against it in 1746. I do not know what proofs of cowardice, on coming to the point, the French *country-people in arms* then shewed; but this I know, our regulars gave incontestible ones of their expedition at getting on board their ships again. There were scurvy reports at that time propagated, of their having taken rather too sudden a panic; but may be they were false ones raised by the French; though never sufficiently contradicted here

As the above quoted paragraph, however, tended to corroborate the recommendation of an attempt to surprise Rochefort, by shewing there was no material opposition to be feared from  
from

from the militia, or the *country people in arms*, you will not think it beside the purpose, my having given you the contradictory idea others have entertained of that point. I do not pretend to say which is the truest; but I dare swear you will not hesitate upon pronouncing which is the most probable.

But granting that the militia was no such invincible obstacle to such a fine body of regular troops, on the supposing these landed, and on their march towards Rochefort; and that it would not have stood a brush at their approach, how many essentials remained to be indispensibly considered? which never were so, because they were not even known, before Rochefort could be, with any shadow of reason, presumed possible to be carried by a *coup-de-main*, if I understand that expression right.

Definitions, it is said, in law are dangerous; but in common sense I am sure, they are absolutely necessary. I presume then, a *coup-de-main* is a French term; for what in plain English I should call, a sudden exploit of arms, or stroke of war; the success of which generally depends on the surprize and consternation of the parties assailed, and the impetuosity of the assailants. I do not, however, pretend to give this English translation of mine for a just one; but of this, I am sure, the French expression, considering the idea it is meant to

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convey, is a very vague and deficient one; as according to the strict import of the words, there is hardly an action in war but what may come under that denomination. But not to chicanery terms farther where the idea seems to be sufficiently settled, you will easily see, in the Enquiry, that the time considered between the fleet's appearance on the coast, that is to say, the 20th, when the object of its mission became patent, and the council of war held the 25th, that surprize which is one good half of the constitutive of a *coup-de-main*, must have absolutely ceased, and been out of the question. Unless, indeed, you can suppose, that after having so long known the general destination of the armament against the French coast, that people had fallen into a profound sleep, or would stand with their hands folded, and omit all dispositions for receiving, as the case required, such a visit.

As I sincerely believe, not only colonel Cl--'s account to be exactly just, to the best of his knowledge and apprehension, and conformable to the truth of things; nay, that no material alterations had been made in the works for defending Rochefort itself, since the time he saw them in 1745; so must it be full as evident to any officer or engineer, who considers his description, joined with the necessity of taking preliminarily the fort of Fouras especially, at the mouth of the river,

(of

(of which colonel Cl---, could for very good reasons give no account at all ;) that few places on the globe could more safely defy a sudden insult than Rochefort.

A numerous militia, a ready supply from neighbouring garrisons, on the appearance of a fleet, the necessity of so much time to be consumed in a debarkation, at so great a distance as Chatellaillon-bay, and that under every disadvantage imaginable ; or the impossibility of landing nearer, without taking the fort of Fouras, at the mouth of the Charente, are all such glaring *remoras*, that before a body of troops could hope to penetrate before Rochfort itself, that town, with no more works than described by colonel C—, might with infinite ease, be put into a condition of laughing at almost any number of troops that should appear before it ; especially unprovided with stores and materials for a regular assault, into which the attempt to surprise it, must have been in course converted. As much as it is a rule in war, not to suppose that an enemy will think of every thing that might guard against an attack, as little can it be one, to suppose that he will think of nothing. And surely a supplement of the deficiencies in the works for defence, that need not take up four and twenty hours labour, could not well be imagined to have been omitted. No wonder that the French have since given out, that if

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they

they could have specifically named the place for the English to have pointed their attack at, it should have been Rochfort. If you would believe them too, or if you will but believe the suggestion of common-sense, nothing could be more grossly false, than the reports which prevailed here of their being so panic-struck, with the preparations of our tremendous armament, as they were represented. Numbers indeed, of families, either retired from the neighbourhood of the shore, or, secured (those who had any) their effects, by sending them up the country; but nothing more: for the rest, all the dispositions were made with the utmost phlegm and tranquillity. The militia was raised, the regular troops stationed, in readiness to carry their assistance where needful. And what in all this is either improbable, or rather not impossible, but to have bespoke? Such a handful of men as our troops of invasion were notoriously known to consist of, could alarm for nothing more than for some sudden assault, or transient ravage of one of their sea-ports along the coast; and for their most capital ones, or such as were the only ones worth attempting, they had little or nothing to dread, from their being inaccessible to our ships; and surely for Rochfort, least of all, situate up a river, unnavigable for vessels of burthen, and where there is even no landing-

landing-place near it for troops under the cover of cannon.

(Enq. p. 20) You will see that this very measure was, 'tis very likely, greatly desired and pressed by his R. H. the duke, as well as the king of Prussia, in the hopes of its making a powerful diversion in their favour. Too great a complaisance then, could not well be paid to their representations, and such a measure, had it had no other motive than condescension to their request, could not but be a laudable one. No less was owing to a prince of our own country, actually engaged with our enemy on the continent, and to a king, whose entertainment of the French forces, has been so serviceable to our cause. But surely they must have meant another sort of diversion, both in point of power and object, than Rochfort, or must have but imperfectly known the situation and natural strength of that place. It is not surely imaginable, that eight or ten thousand men designed against a coast, neither unprovided with regulars nor militia, to say nothing of the fortified places with which it is every where lined, could frighten the French court into the recalling a single file of musqueteers from Germany: that they could but do, in case of expecting the invasion of an army sufficient to attempt the conquest of, or at least a material penetration into the heart of

their country. Such a plan required another sort of preparation than we made for a mere coup-de-main. The saying of Schomberg, who had no sort of reason to love the French, and was one of king William's best generals, is well known, viz. "That attacking France in France, was taking a bull by the horns;" alluding to the excellent fortifications with which it is every where provided, and which are at once its defence against foreign invasion, and its tyrannical strong-holds for perpetuating domestic slavery: an advantage which Britain would not wish to buy at so dear a rate, nor, thank God, has any occasion for, whilst its natural bulwark of a superior navy subsists.

Victor Amadeus of Savoy, whose just jealousy of French ambition no ties of alliance could dissipate, and was certainly neither a coward nor a bad politician, on being urged to make an irruption into France, constantly answered, "That he knew a thousand ways into France, but did not know one out of it again."

Can the commander of the expedition then, who was at once intrusted with the success of it, and the lives of so many of his gallant countrymen, incur so much as the shadow of blame, for making a point of previously taking the fort of Fouras, by way of securing a retreat, when the hopes  
of

of taking Rochefort by surprize were already palpably cut off? Where the open conquest indeed of a country has been intended, a commander has, in order to take from his troops all hopes of retreat, burnt the ships that brought them, from which they were to know, that there was no alternative for them but death or conquest. But this bold measure always supposed in the commander a thorough knowledge of the country he was attempting, and of the dangers he was to encounter; whereas, in this case, the state of the place to be attacked is not, even to this hour, known here, with any sort of precision sufficient to ground a plan of operation upon it.

To have landed then, and, without securing fort Fouras, to have marched on to Rochefort, without the least intelligence of what dispositions were there made to receive them, or on such a mad presumption as that of their having been intirely neglected, would not have argued true courage, or even merited so honourable an appellation as that of rashness, which is often in military exploits crowned by success; but of such gross stupidity and ignorance of duty, as no general, that deserved the name of one, could have been guilty of it.

Fouras then was undoubtedly to be taken, before the reduction of Rochefort could be  
at-



attempted. But how? " Ay, that is the " question." Difficulties invincible appeared, merely from its situation, against carrying even that paultry hen-coop. A single ship, laying against it, would probably have battered it to the ground in a few hours; but even a frigate could not be got up within gun-shot of it (*Eng. p. 32*). The pilot Thierry engaged, indeed, to pilot a ship within a quarter of a mile of it; but it does not appear that he was capable of performing that engagement. The Barfleur, which drew two foot water less than the Magnanime (the ship which he desired for that purpose, and which was refused him, on the account of the damage it had recently sustained), was on ground where she lay, between *four* and *five* miles distance from the shore. Even a bombketch (*Eng. p. 44*), that drew but eleven feet of water, ran aground at a greater distance from Fouras than the bombardier could throw the shells, with the greatest requisite of powder, at an elevation of forty-five degrees, that is to say, above two miles and two thirds. In the mean time, you will observe, the French gave them one proof of their being neither asleep, nor frightened out of their senses; since, whilst the bombketch was ashore, they detached two large row-boats with two pieces of heavy cannon in their prow, and full

full of men each, to attack the ketch, in the face of the whole fleet; and would probably have carried her too, if the vice-admiral Knowles had not effectually interposed, by making a signal immediately for all the boats of the fleet to speed to her rescue, himself going on board the Coventry-frigate, to drive away the row-boats; in which time he ran a-ground, considerably within the space of an hour, five times, and at a greater distance from the shore than the bomb-ketch.

This however may shew you, that Fouras was unexpugnable by our shipping. And here it is presumeable, that the pilot Thierry, who had engaged for bringing the Magananime, which drew (as before observed) two foot water more than the Barfleur, must have acknowledged his mistake; for it can hardly be supposed that he would refuse undertaking to pilot the ship substituted on such good reasons. He was not, you will remark, examined before the board, being, it seems, absent, as well as sir Edward Hawke.

It appears too, by the Enquiry, that even after the council of war of the 25th of September, in which it was *unanimously* agreed, that the reduction of Rochefort was, in the actual position of things, neither *adviseable* or *practicable*, both the land and sea commanders were highly unwilling to give over  
all

all thoughts of landing, and attempting at least to do something. Some probability of success in attacking Fouras dawning to them, in fresh information that came in to them by their prisoners, they greedily seized it. The coming on the back of it, by landing forces in Chatelaillon-bay, carried with it at first an air of temptation. Nothing seemed more easy, more inviting, or more safe, than a fine beach, accessible to boats; not a man to be seen on the shore, no batteries to annoy a landing on it: for a few guns, *en barbette*, on Chatelaillon-point, that could not reach it, are scarce worth mentioning. This spot, though at so much greater a distance from Rochefort, yet as it seemed to give some chance for an attack by land on Fouras, induced the land and sea officers in chief command to think of putting the forces ashore there.

Here it plainly appears, by the Enquiry, that they were so far from being desirous of returning without attempting a descent, that they seized the first overture of one, without even a due regard to the most obvious rules of war, and I might not unjustly add, of common sense. For, according to all accounts, this beach was surrounded by sand-hills, considerably within less than musket-shot of the water-edge, by which any number of men might have been concealed,

ceased, with the utmost safety from the cannon of the ships, till the instant of falling should offer for taking advantages of the troops in their landing.

This too was a circumstance in which the night would but be the more favorable to the enemies ; in the confusion they must so reasonably hope to find troops setting foot on an unknown shore, themselves not only being at home, with a firm footing on dry land, but in case of a superior repulse, being assured of an easy retreat. If it should be said, that the existence of troops behind those sand-hills is only a gratuitous supposition, a mere begging of the question ; let any one who knows any thing of the matter, but ask himself, whether any general could possibly not take it for granted, that there must be forces at hand, even without the information of prisoners ? Would any man in his senses, that knew in the least what France or War was, allow himself to doubt of their being troops in that country, alarmed and forewarned as it had been ? The motions then of our fleet being watched, as they naturally must have been, nothing on earth could offer a more favorable mask to the numbers the French would have to oppose a descent, than those sand-hills. As nothing need to be surer too than that such forces they had in readiness ; so it was equally

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sure,

ture, that it was their game to conceal them, till the madness of a descent should afford them a cheap market of us, when not the greatest courage could have stood the least chance again such obvious and unfair advantage.

But this was not all. When from an eagerness pardonable only to that courage which does not stand upon weighing of obstacles, and to that just spirit of theirs for serving their country at all events, this landing was resolved on; when even one division of the troops was already in the boats prepared to carry them to land, you will find a new and insuperable difficulty started. It appeared, that it was not possible to carry above two thousand men at a time to the landing-place. There were they to remain six hours, exposed to the whole force of an enemy, that could not well be supposed to be dead asleep, or insensible of such an advantage, before they could possibly be reinforced by a second debarkation. Then it was that the commanders opened their eyes at length, on the folly of such an attempt, which had been shut by the false shame only of doing nothing, where nothing was to be done: then it was they returned to the most sensible resolution they had yet taken, that of the council of the 25th, of giving over what, for so many clear reasons,

reasons, had so much better never have been undertaken.

I do not ask you to suffer your judgment to be influenced by merely the names of the gentlemen who subscribed to that consultation of the 25th, though I firmly believe they do not yield in point of bravery even to the foremost of those who have blamed their resolution for returning. No! only weigh but their reasons, and the examination previous to the report, and more especially the defective information of the first suggester of the undertaking (be it said without the least offence to him, since he could say no more than he knew, and what he did say was probably the exactest truth,) and you will own, that none but the French could have wished our armament had proceeded further in the execution of its mission. They indeed might have rejoiced, that so fine a body of troops should fall into a trap, the grossness of which would have robbed them of any pity for falling into it. They must, in all human probability, have been the victims to a mistake that was not their own, and that with their eyes open on the palpability of it.

But, Sir, the unpromisingness of this expedition was not judged of only by the event, but numbers here, on knowing it's destination for the coast of France, and the constitution

of things in those parts, made even no merit of pronouncing boldly, that nothing would or could be done by that grand armada. Many too, on seeing the equipment of so gallant a fleet, lamented it's not having been earlier fitted out against another, and the only place in which France can receive a wound in her vitals, and that is *Cape-Breton*. The infinite importance of America, and the actual situation of things there, loudly called for such a decisive measure. And what could hinder it's being taken with all assurance of success, early enough in the season, unless the activity of the state's being about that time miserably suspended by a scramble for power amongst private jundos, and insignificant party-cabals may be given for a reason?

Had a much less armament than this one proceeded on that destination, the French interest in America must, in all human probability, have been destroyed by the ax being thus laid to the root; and the ships of our late unfortunate squadron in those parts might have, not unlikely, been riding the storm out safe and triumphant in the harbour of *Louisbourg*. Those who know most of things, know there is nothing exaggerated in the consequences, nor romantic in the hopes of such an undertaking; especially had it been then carried into execution. Had *Rocheport* even been taken,

taken, what would have been the consequence but the destruction of a few ships, naval stores, and arsenal : call it great ; but still it could be no more than a transient reparable damage : whereas by getting possession of Cape-Breton, you not only cut off the spring-head of the French power in America, but may nip in the bud their best, and perhaps only nursery of seamen for their navy, with many other advantages therefrom, too obvious to need deducing here, where the mention of it figures only as a digression ; but a digression you will, I hope, pardon, in favor of the well-meaning of it.

In that consultation of the 25th above referred to, and especially from the opinion of the chief-engineer, who cannot be supposed very favorable to any resolution of desistance from an attempt of which himself was in some sort the parent, you will easily see at one glance, the nature, and cause of failure of the enterprise. You will see, that not a soul on board knew half the requisites to be known before any execution could be proceeded to, or even rightly planned ; and at the same time, that it was no fault of theirs that they did not know them. Vague and contradictory reports of the state of Rochefort, of its ditch and rampart ; in short, only the most material points, and such as the fate of the enterprise, and



and of the lives of those employed in it, must turn upon, were the very points that remained, and still remain perfectly unascertained.

The plan furnished from memory by the chief engineer, with at least a confessed doubt of his, for want of information, what alterations might have been made since, was of itself sufficient to assure any general or engineer, " That if no place was more capable of being " taken by assault, if it could be come at by surprise ; so no place, you can perhaps name, was more capable of being, within even a few hours, put into a posture of defence against such a sudden assault : and that no regular attack made any part of the design, cannot appear plainer, than for so good a reason as the engineer himself gives. " That the small " quantity of artillery they had, was not sent " on that plan." (Enq. p. 105.)

The possibility of a surprise, then being absolutely over, the only chance for success by a regular assault, must have been their bringing their forces before it, and that too without artillery. But even that chance, desperate as it was, and which the commanders however were apparently determined to try, was denied them. By water, the situation was inaccessible : by landing indeed at Chatelaillou-bay, that is to say, if the French would have been so very polite as not to molest

left them, in their attempt of it, they might have got perhaps before Rochfort; and what to do there? to stand with their fingers in their mouths; or try to batter down its defences with threats, for other effective arms they could have none. In short, when I figure to myself the situation of our troops, fairly arrived before Rochfort, drums beating, and colors flying, I am tempted to think the French knew their own interest too well to interfere with the landing of our forces, or hinder them from proceeding up to the town. Nothing, in all human probability would have afforded them a finer opportunity, or have played the game better into their hands. No retreat, no communication with the ships, any more than if these ships had been at Japan, no chance for escaping, but by fighting their way back again, under the greatest uncertainty in the world, of being able to get off the shore, even should the boats be ready to take them off, and all the while harrassed by those French forces, which not invincibly to have presumed, were ready for their reception, after so long an alarm, would have been a folly beneath serious refutation: all these, I say, incline me to think the French desired nothing so much, as what some are so sorry here did not happen. Every true Englishman, however, who will give his own judgment

ment fair play, in scorn of popular and ignorant prejudice, may rejoice, that such a number of his countrymen did not perish in so silly a snare, without profit to their country, without honor to themselves.

You will, I hope too, Sir, forgive me if I own myself not extremely edified by some passages in the enquiry, of which I respectfully take for granted, the forms of public procedure, rendered the publication indispensably necessary; and which otherwise one would imagine, were highly improper to be published: and that is the names and descriptions of persons, who either they, or their families are still under the French power, or are liable to come under it. Every one knows the alert and watchful genius of that government, over its subjects, or rather its slaves, whose actions and words are under the rigidest comptroll of its arbitrary resentment or caprice.

Mr. Macnamara is, if I am not mistaken, deceased, or the least that his politeness to an officer in English regimentals, in permitting him to view the works of the place, would have cost him, was a severe reprimand, or perhaps a dismissal from his post, which he would have owed to the specific mention of him in the report. Further: amongst the accidents of war, there might occasions often offer for examination of French prisoners, from whence  
very

as well as impolitic spirit of persecution. Numbers, we are told, of these people offered their service, specifically on this very occasion, to the French government. But, however that may be, I cannot but think such a passage might, for obvious reasons, have better been left out, especially as it is nothing to the purpose of the Enquiry.

I come now to the Report itself, given in by the appointed commissioners of Enquiry, and resulting from the matter of it. (*See Enq. p. 60.*) And here I begin with fairly owning to you, that it passes my comprehension. Could so extravagant a case be supposed, as that there was a collusive compromise agreed on between the projectors of the expedition and the commanders of it; that since some Report must necessarily pass, such an one should be dictated as should neither acquit the one, nor condemn the other; I should think there could not have been a more admirable piece framed for such a purpose.

Not a word is, indeed, said in it that might impeach the wisdom of the projection, or impute the failure of the expedition to its insufficiency. But not a word too is there in it, but what the commanders might even glory in avowing and subscribing to. If it satisfies the public but half as much as

it ought to satisfy them, then all parties owe to those honorable personages who passed the Report the justest thanks.

I pass over the preamble, as being merely matter of form and introduction; and shall only point out to you some parts of the Report, that cannot but justify to you my admiration of it. I suppose you have it before you, and proceed.

The first cause of failure appears to have been the not attacking Fouras by sea, at the same time that it would be attacked by land. But the absence of sir Edward Hawke, and of the pilot of the *Magnanime*, not admitting an examination into that particular, the opinion upon that point is left open and undecided. All that appears very plain is, that Fouras was inaccessible to an attack by shipping, notwithstanding the pilot *Thierri's* promise, which, it should seem, he could not make good. At least, in this the commanders are in no fault.

Another cause of failure assigned in the Report, is the non-attempting to land on the report received on the 24th of September from rear-admiral Brodrick and the captains, who had been sent out to sound and reconnoitre; when, instead of landing directly, a council of war was called on the 25th, in which it was *unanimously* resolved *not* to land,

land, as the attempt upon Rochefort was neither *adviseable* nor *practicable*. To say the truth, after such a report as the commanders then received, after what they themselves could see of the local position of things, and what they must know or presume of the state of the country, they were, if it is not too disrespectful in me to say so, rather in the wrong for calling any consultation, if their resolution could have dispensed with the form of it : for, in fact, there was no matter of consultation at all. The nature of the errand they were sent on, and the impossibility of its execution, were already plain enough.

“ *But* it did not appear that there were  
 “ then, or at any times afterwards, either  
 “ a body of troops or batteries on the shore,  
 “ sufficient to have prevented their descent.”

This is most religiously true. As to troops, nothing can on earth be more certain, than that troops there were and must be in the country ; and as certain, that the French must have been very great idiots indeed to have suffered them to be *seen*, when it was so easy and so much their game to conceal them. As to batteries in Chatellaillon-bay, the only convenient place for a descent, not one officer ever said there were any, or did not but ~~aver~~ the contrary ; but who of them  
 could

could not but see the impropriety, according to all the rules of war and of common sense, of effectuating a descent, from which no good could be hoped for the success of the main of the enterprize, the attack upon Rochefort? Could any thing counterbalance the moral assurance of being cut off division by division, which must have been the case, unless the French could be suspected of falling off, on such a tempting occasion, from their usual alertness, or have only suspended its exertion, in order to draw us more compleatly into the snare?

“ It does not appear (says the Report),  
 “ that there were any sufficient reasons to  
 “ induce the council of war to believe that  
 “ Rochefort was so far changed, in respect  
 “ of its strength, or posture of defence,  
 “ since the expedition was first resolved on  
 “ in England, as to prevent all attempts of  
 “ an attack upon the place, in order to  
 “ burn and destroy the docks, magazines,  
 “ arsenals, and shipping, in obedience,  
 “ &c.”

To all this the commanders might cheerfully subscribe, since it does honor both to their sense and obedience. They were sent surely on the plan of a surprize, or coup-de-main. Nothing can be plainer than their instructions on this head: but that case of  
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surprize not existing, as considering the situation of that place, it could never, but by the favor of a miracle, exist: Rochefort might not indeed very materially be changed as to its strength, or posture of defence; but obviously ceased, from the instant there was no hope of coming on it by surprize, to be a place possible to be taken by a sudden assault.

As to what the Report adds, “ that no  
 “ reason could exist sufficient to prevent the  
 “ attempt of landing the troops, previous  
 “ to the 28th of September, as the council  
 “ *then* unanimously resolved to land with all  
 “ possible dispatch.” Nothing can be more  
 just, on the supposition that it was right to  
 have landed at all. It is even too favorable  
 to the commanders; for, certainly every  
 hour’s delay, after the instant of their arrival,  
 strengthened their reason for not landing,  
 could that have required strengthening.  
 And they are justly punished for the impru-  
 dence of not adhering to their first and best  
 resolution of the 25th not to land at all, un-  
 less their zeal for attempting evident impos-  
 sibilities, in the service of their country, may  
 be allowed to excuse them, and the inten-  
 tion acquit them for the absurdity of their  
 perseverance in an enterprize, of which  
 their own personal knowledge might have  
 already



already sufficiently exploded the plan to them.

Even then by the report itself, abstractedly considered, you may, Sir, easily discern, whether the failure is imputable to the original sin of insufficiency in the project itself, or to the persons commissioned to carry it into execution. You may safely pronounce, without the hazard of a rash judgment, on the materials of information before you, whereon the enterprize was it seems embraced and planned, whether all the pre-requisites of knowledge were duly obtained before the dispatch in the armament (that is to say, on supposing that it was ever seriously meant, or hoped that it should succeed) or whether a set of gentlemen of un-attainted characters, and trusted with the arms of their country, could be so grossly wanting to its honor, and to their own, as to return back with so bad a grace, if a better knowledge and a personal view of things had not forced them to it, with a regret they rendered but too apparent, by persisting in it so much beyond the bounds of their duty, that one would have thought them willing to prefer the bare *opinion* of others at a distance, to their own actual and palpable recognition on the spot.

Should

Should you, however, after settling this point in your own mind, proceed to any degree of curiosity for what further may be expected from this measure of an enquiry, which seems but a preparatory one to an ulterior procedure upon it, it is not at least to me you must address yourself for satisfaction. The low level range of humble common sense can never pretend to reach the sublimity of those clouds in which the exalted wisdom of our councils has so long rolled, and carried the public affairs to that pitch of prosperity and renown in which they are at present so conspicuously seen. But if you will deign to accept a general rule of conjecture on any future turns of affairs that as yet lie hid within the womb of time, or in the heads of our modern statesmen ; a rule that has for these many years hardly been known to fail ; this it is. Imagine to yourself specifically what is most agreeable to common sense, and to the once believed just order of judgment, and then do not be *surprised* at finding the event diametrically opposite to it. In the present current of things, no oracle can afford you a surer prognostic than this method of anticipation by contraries. Should you then find a statue decreed to the great projector of this celebrated expedition, and national

disgrace, or even an ignominious punishment allotted for those unfortunate enough to have been sent in command upon it, there can be nothing so strange in such a distribution of justice as to make you stare at it, if you reflect upon all the unaccountableness of our judgment and affairs for these many years last past. The folly would indeed now be to be surprised at any thing.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

## ERRATA.

Page 6, l. 4. for *are*, read *are not*. P. 95, l. 14. for *thought*, read *though*. L. 15, for *I*, read *I* no comma.



6

T H E  
P R O C E E D I N G S  
O F A

**General Court-Martial**

H E L D I N T H E

**Council-Chamber at Whitehall, on Wednesday the 14th, and continued by several Adjournments to Tuesday the 20th of December 1757, upon the Trial of Lieutenant-General Sir JOHN MORDAUNT, by Virtue of his MAJESTY'S Warrant, bearing Date the 3d Day of the same Month.**

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**Published by Authority.**

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L O N D O N :

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MDCCLVIII.

[Price 1s. 6d.]

## ADVERTISEMENT

19th of Jan. 1758.

**A** MAP of the BASQUE ROAD and the adjacent Coast, agreeable to the Draught produced at the Tryal by Lieutenant Colonel *Murray*, as taken upon the Spot by a Gentleman on the Expedition, and which Lieutenant Colonel *Murray* from his own Observations thinks to be just, was intended to have been annexed; but, that being found impracticable, without retarding the Publication of the Tryal, the said Map will be delivered on Tuesday next, Price 3d.

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GEORGE R.

L. S. **W**HEREAS Lieutenant General Sir *John Mordaunt* was appointed by us Commander in Chief of our Forces sent on an Expedition to the Coast of *France*, and received Orders and Instructions relative thereto from us, under our Royal Sign Manual, and also by one of our principal Secretaries of State: And whereas the said Lieutenant General is now in Arrest by our Command, for disobeying our said Orders and Instructions, which Charge we have thought fit should be inquired into by a General Court Martial: Our Will and Pleasure is, that a General Court Martial be forthwith held upon this Occasion, which is to consist of our right Trusty and well beloved *James Lord Tyranny*, Lieutenant General of our Forces, whom we do appoint to be President thereof, and of our right Trusty and well beloved *Charles Lord Cadogan*, our trusty and well beloved *John Guise*, *Richard Onslow*, *Henry Pulteney*, Sir *Charles Howard*, Knight of the Bath, *John Huske*, our right trusty and well beloved Counsellor *John Lord De Lawarr*, our



trusty and well beloved *James Cholmondeley*, Lieu-  
 tenant Generals; our trusty and well beloved  
*Maurice Bocland*, our right trusty and well be-  
 loved Cousin *William* Earl of *Panmure*, our  
 trusty and well beloved *Kerr*, com-  
 monly called Earl of *Ancram*, our right trusty  
 and well beloved Cousins *William* Earl of *Har-*  
*rington*, and *George* Earl of *Albermarle*, our  
 trusty and well beloved *Henry Holmes*, *Alexan-*  
*der Dury*, *John Mostyn*, *Edward Carr*, Major  
 Generals of our Forces; our trusty and well be-  
 loved Colonels *William Kingsley*, *Alexander Du-*  
*rroure*, and *Bennet Noel*; all of whom, or the  
 said President together with any Twelve, or  
 more, of the said other Officers, may consti-  
 tute the said General Court Martial: And you  
 are to order the Provost Martial General, or  
 his Deputy, to give Notice to the said Presi-  
 dent and Officers, and all others whom it may  
 concern, when and where the said Court Mar-  
 tial is to be held, and to summon such Wit-  
 nesses, as shall be able to give Testimony in  
 this Matter; the said Provost Martial General  
 and his Deputy being hereby directed to obey  
 your Orders, and give Attendance, where it  
 shall be requisite: And we do further autho-  
 rize and empower the said Court Martial to  
 hear and examine all such Matters and In-  
 formations as shall be brought before them,  
 touching the Charge aforesaid, and proceed  
 in the Tryal of the said Lieutenant General  
 Sir

**Sir John Mordaunt**, and in giving of Sentence according to the Rules of Military Discipline ; which said Sentence you are to return to our Secretary at War, to be laid before us for our Consideration. And, for so doing, this shall be, as well to you, as to the said Court Martial, and all others concerned, a sufficient Warrant. Given at our Court at St. *James's* this Third Day of *December* 1757, in the Thirty First Year of our Reign.

By his MAJESTY's Command,

HOLDERNESSE.

To our Trusty and well beloved  
*Thomas Morgan*, Esq; Judge  
Advocate General of our Forces,  
or his Deputy.



At a GENERAL COURT MARTIAL,  
held in the Council Chamber at *Whitehall*  
on *Wednesday* the 14th, and continued by  
several Adjournments to *Tuesday* the 20th  
*December* 1757, by virtue of his Majesty's  
special Warrant, bearing Date the 3d Day  
of the same Month.

LIEUT. GEN. JAMES LORD TYRAWLY, President.

LIEUT. GENERAL {  
CHARLES LORD CADOGAN,  
JOHN GUISE,  
RICHARD ONSLOW,  
HENRY PULTENEY,  
SIR CHARLES HOWARD,  
JOHN HUSKE,  
JOHN LORD DELAWARR,  
JAMES CHOLMONDELEY.

MAJOR GENERAL {  
MAURICE BOCLAND,  
WILLIAM EARL OF PANMURE,  
WILLIAM EARL OF ANCRAM,  
WILLIAM EARL OF HARRINGTON,  
GEORGE EARL OF ALBEMARLE,  
HENRY HOLMES,  
ALEXANDER DURY,  
JOHN MOSTYN,  
EDWARD CARR.

COLONEL WILLIAM KINGSLEY,  
COLONEL ALEXANDER DUROURE,  
COLONEL BENNET NOBL.

CHA. GOULD DEPUTY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL.

THE Members being met, and duly sworn,  
(the Judge Advocate being also sworn, and  
prosecuting in his Majesty's Name.)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR JOHN MORDAUNT came Prisoner before the Court, and the following Charge was exhibited against him, *viz.* " That he  
 " being appointed by the King Commander in Chief  
 " of his Majesty's Forces, sent on an Expedition to  
 " the Coast of *France*, and having received Orders  
 " and Instructions relative thereto from his Majesty,  
 " under his Royal Sign Manual, and also by one of  
 " his principal Secretaries of State, hath disobeyed  
 " his Majesty's said Orders and Instructions."——

AN ENTRY in a Book of Mr. *Secretary Pitt's* Office being proved upon Oath by *Robert Wood*, Esq; appointing the said Lieutenant General Sir *John Mordaunt* General and Commander in Chief of all and singular his Majesty's Troops and Land Forces appointed or to be appointed for a secret Expedition for his Majesty's Service, bearing Date the 3d of *August*, 1757, was read.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT, Esq; one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State being sworn, and questioned touching his Majesty's Instructions to Lieutenant General Sir *John Mordaunt* relative to the said Expedition, said, That he had the Honour of receiving such Instructions from his Majesty under his Royal Sign Manual, which he gave to Mr. *Wood* his under Secretary, in order to his delivering them to Sir *John Mordaunt*.

A PAPER, purporting to be a Letter, dated *London*, *July* the 15th 1757, from Captain (now Lieutenant Colonel) *Clerk*, was shewn to Mr. *Secretary Pitt*, and he being desired to inform the Court; whether he knew the said Letter to have been at any Time communicated to Sir *John Mordaunt*, answered, That the same is the original Letter, which was delivered to him by Sir *John* (now Lord) *Ligonier*, and produced by him before the Lords of the Cabinet, and that the Matter of this Letter afterwards made the Subject of two Night's Conversation; Sir *John Mordaunt* and Major General *Conway* examining, and almost cross examining Mr. *Clerk* concerning every Matter

Matter contained therein, and a great deal more, that the Letter led to.

ANOTHER PAPER, purporting to be a Minute, taken in *Arlington-street* in *August* 1757, containing an Examination of *Joseph Thierry*, a *French* Pilot, was shewn to *Mr. Secretary Pitt*, who was desired to inform the Court, whether he remembers such Examination, and whether the several Persons were present, who appear upon the Face of the said Minute to have been at that Meeting; to which he answered, That the Meeting being at *Lord Holderness's* House, his Lordship held the Pen, and not he; that the Paper now shewn him is an exact Transcript of what was reduced into writing, as the Substance of the Examination of the Pilot, but is by no Means the whole of it; as he underwent a very long and close Cross Examination for two Hours together, throughout which he established the Facts with a Readiness and Presence of Mind, that few Men in higher Life are equal to.

A PAPER entitled *Memoire sur la Force actuelle de la France, & les Services, aux quels Elle est employée dans l'Année 1757*,— and docketted, as received *July* 28th 1757, and communicated, at a Meeting at *Lord Holderness's* House, to the Generals appointed for an Expedition to the Coast of *France*, being also shewn to *Mr. Secretary Pitt*, he was desired to speak to the Authenticity of that Paper, and as to its having been communicated to *Sir John Mordaunt*:— He thereupon informed the Court, that the Paper came through *Lord Holderness's* Department, and was introduced by his Lordship at a Meeting, where *Sir John Mordaunt* and *Major General Conway* were present. It was a Paper, on which much Reliance was had by the King's Servants, as coming from one of their most confidential Correspondents, and was then produced as a Piece of Intelligence, to which they gave much Credit; and a subsequent Proof of its Authenticity is, that Advice has since been received of the Court of *France* having  
been

been obliged, upon the Alarm being taken, to march her Horse and Foot Guards from *Paris*. He added, that he remembers one, or both of these Gentlemen, (*viz.* Sir *John Mordaunt* and Major General *Conway*) rose up, and looked at the Paper more than once, and with Pen and Ink noted down several Facts from it, and a good deal of Time was engaged in Discourse upon the Subject.

Mr. Secretary *Pitt* being asked, whether Copies of either of the three last mentioned Papers were delivered to Sir *John Mordaunt*?

Answered, he cannot recollect, whether Copies of them were put into his Hands; from his Memory, he rather thinks not.

Two other Papers, the one purporting to be "Minutes of a Council of War held on Board the *Neptune* the 25th of *September 1757*," and the other, "Minutes of a Council of War held on Board the *Ramilies* 28th *September 1757*," were shewn to Mr *Pitt*, who informed the Court, that these two Papers were delivered to him by Sir *John Mordaunt* in the first Visit, as he thinks, after his Return; being to the same Effect, as those before transmitted to him by Sir *Edward Hawke*.

Mr. Secretary *Pitt* being asked, by Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire, whether he, Sir *John Mordaunt*, did cross examine either Lieutenant Colonel *Clerk*, or the Pilot?

Answered, At this Distance of Time, and, as he then had no Thoughts of being examined on this disagreeable Occasion, he cannot take upon himself positively to say, by whom in particular the Questions were asked; but he knows a thorough Cross Examination was made by some Military Gentlemen, — he cannot say positively by Sir *John*, — in order to get at the Certainty, particularly as to the State of *Rockefort*.

Being asked also, Whether the Pilot mentioned at the Council, that the taking of Fort *Fouras* by a Ship was practicable?

Answered,

Answered to this Effect, — That he remembers the taking of Fort *Fouras* by Sea was mentioned ; but that he went away from the Meeting with this Impression, that nothing was clear about the taking of any Place by Sea, but *l'Isle d'Aix* ; he found no Answer that led him to believe, that a Ship could lyē up near enough to *Fouras* to batter the Fort ; he wished, he had.

A Copy of Instructions was then read, being first proved on Oath by *Robert Wood*, Esq; to be a true Copy of the Instructions, which he received from Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, under the Sign Manual ; and which he afterwards delivered to Sir *John Mordaunt*, who read them in his Presence, viz.

**A. GEORGE R.**

Secret Instructions for our trusty and well-beloved Sir *John Mordaunt*, Knight of the Bath, Lieutenant General of our Forces, whom we have appointed General and Commander in Chief of all and singular our Troops and Land Forces appointed or to be appointed for a secret Expedition for our Service, or for such other Officer, on whom the Command is chief of our said Troops and Land Forces may devolve. Given at our Court at *Kensington* the 5th Day of *August*, 1757, in the Thirty-first Year of Our Reign.

Having by Our Commission, bearing Date the third Day of this Instant appointed You to be General and Commander in Chief of all and singular Our Forces appointed or to be appointed for a secret Expedition : For your better Discharge of the great and important Trust thereby reposed in you, We have judged it proper to give you the following Instructions.

I. You shall immediately, upon the Receipt of these Our Instructions, repair to the Isle of *Wight*, where We have appointed Ships to convey You and the Forces under your Command to the Coasts  
of



' of *France*; and so soon as the said Forces shall be  
 ' embarked, You shall accordingly proceed without  
 ' Loss of Time, under Convoy of a Squadron of  
 ' our Ships of War, commanded by our trusty and  
 ' well beloved Sir *Edward Hawke*, Knight of the  
 ' Bath, Admiral of the Blue Squadron of our Fleet,  
 ' whom we have appointed Commander in Chief of  
 ' Our Ships to be employed in this Expedition; the  
 ' said Admiral, or the Commander in Chief of Our  
 ' said Ships for the Time being, being instructed to  
 ' co-operate with you, and to be aiding and assisting  
 ' in all such Enterprizes, as by these Our Instructions  
 ' you shall be directed to undertake for our Ser-  
 ' vice.

' II. Whereas We have determined, with the  
 ' Blessing of God, to prosecute the just War in which  
 ' we are engaged against the *French* King with the  
 ' utmost Vigour; and it being highly expedient and  
 ' of urgent Necessity to make some Expedition, that  
 ' may cause a Diversion, and engage the Enemy to  
 ' employ in their own defence, a considerable Part  
 ' of their Forces, destined to invade and oppress  
 ' the Liberties of the Empire, and to subvert the In-  
 ' dependency of *Europe*: And, if possible, to make  
 ' some effectual Impression on the Enemy, which by  
 ' disturbing and shaking the Credit of their publick  
 ' Loans, impairing the Strength and Resources of  
 ' their Navy, as well as disconcerting, and in part  
 ' frustrating their dangerous and extensive Operations  
 ' of War, may reflect Lustre on our Arms; and add  
 ' Life and Strength to the common Cause: And  
 ' whereas we are persuaded, that nothing, in the  
 ' present Situation of Affairs, can so speedily and  
 ' essentially annoy and distress *France*, as a success-  
 ' ful Enterprize against *Rochefort*: Our Will and  
 ' Pleasure is, That you do attempt, as far as shall  
 ' be found practicable, a Descent, with the Forces  
 ' under your Command, on the *French* Coast, at or  
 ' near *Rochefort*, in order to attack, if practicable,  
 ' and, by a vigorous Impression, force that Place;  
 ' and

and to burn and destroy, to the utmost of your Power,  
all Docks, Magazines, Arsenals, and Shipping,  
that shall be found there, and exert such other Efforts, as you shall judge most proper for annoying the Enemy.

III. After the Attempt on *Rockefort* shall either have succeeded, or failed; and in Case the Circumstances of our Forces and Fleet shall, with Prospect of Success, still admit of further Operations; you are next to consider Port *l'Orient* and *Bourdeaux*, as the most important Objects of Our Arms, on the Coast of *France*: And Our Will and Pleasure accordingly is, That you do proceed, successively, to an Attempt on both, or either of those Places, as shall be judged practicable; or on any other Place, that shall be thought most adviseable, from *Bourdeaux* homewards to *Havre*, in order to carry and spread with as much Rapidity, as may be, a warm Alarm along the Maritime Provinces of *France*.

IV. In Case, by the Blessing of God upon Our Arms, you should make yourself Master of any Place on the Coast of *France*; Our Will and Pleasure is, That you do not keep Possession thereof; but that after demolishing and destroying, as far as may be, all Works, Defences, Magazines, Arsenals, Shipping, and Naval Stores, you do proceed, successively, on the ulterior Operations of this Expedition, according as any of them shall be judged adviseable, and may be performed within such Time, as shall be consistent with your Return with the Troops under your Command, so as to be in *England* at, or about, as near as may be, the End of *September*, unless the Circumstances of Our Forces and Fleet shall necessarily require their Return sooner: And you are to land the Troops at *Portsmouth*, or such other of Our Ports, as the Exigency of the Case may suggest.

V. Whereas it is necessary, that upon certain Occasions you should have the Assistance of a Court-

• cil of War; We have thought fit to appoint such  
 • a Council, which shall consist of four of Our Prin-  
 • cipal Land Officers, and of an equal Number of  
 • Our principal Sea Commanders, including the Com-  
 • manders in Chief of Our Land and Sea Forces (ex-  
 • cept in Cases happening at Land, relating to the  
 • carrying on any Military Operations, to be per-  
 • formed by Our Land Forces only, in which Cases  
 • you may call a Council of War, consisting of such  
 • Officers of Our Land Forces as you shall think  
 • proper:) And all such Land and Sea Officers, in  
 • the several Cases before-mentioned, are hereby re-  
 • spectively directed, from Time to Time, to be aid-  
 • ing and assisting with their Advice, so often as they  
 • shall be called together by you, or by the Com-  
 • mander in Chief of our Squadron for that Purpose:  
 • And in all such Councils of War, when assembled,  
 • the Majority of Voices shall determine the Reso-  
 • lutions thereof; and in Case the Voices shall hap-  
 • pen to be equal, the President shall have the cast-  
 • ing Vote.

VI. • And whereas the Success of this Expedition  
 • will very much depend upon an entire good Un-  
 • derstanding between Our Land and Sea Officers;  
 • We do hereby strictly enjoin and require you, on  
 • your Part, to maintain and cultivate such good Un-  
 • derstanding and Agreement, and to order, that the  
 • Soldiers under your Command, should man the  
 • Ships where there shall be Occasion for them, and  
 • when they can be spared from the Land Service;  
 • as the Commander in Chief of our Squadron is  
 • instructed, on his Part, to entertain and cultivate  
 • the same good Understanding and Agreement, and  
 • to order the Sailors and Marines, and also the  
 • Soldiers serving as Part of the Complements of Our  
 • Ships, to assist Our Land Forces, if judged expe-  
 • dient, by taking Post on Shore; manning Bar-  
 • teries; covering the Boats; securing the safe reim-  
 • barkation of the Troops; and such other Services  
 • at Land, as may be consistent with the Safety of  
 • Our

Our Fleet. And in order to establish the strictest Union, that may be, between you and the Commander in Chief of our Ships, you are hereby required to communicate these Instructions to him, and he will be directed to communicate those, he shall receive, to you.

S. VII. You shall, from Time to Time, and as you shall have Opportunity, send constant Accounts of your Proceedings, in the Execution of these Our Instructions, to one of Our principal Secretaries of State; from whom you will receive such farther Orders and Directions, as We may think proper to give you.

G. R.

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE then informed the Court, that he is not instructed to give up any Point, wherein Lieutenant General Sir John Mordaunt should appear to them, from the Evidence, to have disobeyed his Majesty's Orders and Instructions; but the Matter which he thinks it is his Duty chiefly to insist upon, as being the principal Object of the Expedition, is a Disobedience of the second Article of the Instructions just now read;—relative to the “attempting, as far as should be found practicable, a Descent, with the Forces under his Command, on the French Coast, at, or near, *Rochfort*, in order to attack, if practicable, and, by a vigorous Impression, force that Place, and to burn and destroy, to the utmost of his Power, all Docks, Magazines, Armaments, and Shipping, that should be found there, and exert such other Efforts, as he should judge most proper for annoying the Enemy;”—and that the Evidence intended to be laid before them was principally applicable to that Point.

The following Papers were then laid before the Court by the Judge Advocate, and read;—some of them as referring to the above Instructions, and being in the Nature of subsequent Orders confirming, strongly enforcing, and in part explaining the said

In-

Instructions, and the others, either as introductory to the former, or as acknowledging the Receipt of them; viz.

A Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Isle of Wight*, 11th August 1757, ten at Night (proved upon Oath to have been received by Mr. *Wood*, and docketted by Mr. *Rivers*, and) admitted by Sir *John Mordaunt*, viz.

SIR,

Being honoured with his Majesty's Command to correspond with you, I think it my Duty to acquaint you, that on my Arrival here on *Monday* last, I was disappointed in finding none of the Transports were come round, and more so in that I have not yet been able to hear any positive Account of them: I have however employed this Interval in giving such Orders, as I thought necessary to have the Troops here in Readiness for their Embarkation at a Moment's Warning.

Having, on the Perusal of my Commission, some Doubt, how far I am impowered to carry the Sentences of Courts Martial in Capital Cases into Execution, during my abode within his Majesty's Dominions, I should be glad, as soon as may be, to know what is his Majesty's Intention on that Head, as there are now many Deserters with us ordered for immediate Trial.

I must also beg Leave to trouble you further, on a Matter which occurs to me relative to the Service I am going upon; which is, that having since my Arrival here conversed with Sir *Edward Hawke* and Vice Admiral *Knowles*, who both seem of Opinion, that it is possible, from the Nature of the Navigation to *Rockefort*, the Fleet may be detained even in Sight of the Coast of *France* for a Week or ten Days, without being able to get into the Road, or off the *Isle D'Aix*, during which Time an Alarm will necessarily

‘ necessarily be given in those Parts ; this Con-  
 ‘ jecture and Situation, if it should happen, appears to  
 ‘ me so very delicate, and equally to the other Ge-  
 ‘ neral Officers on the Expedition, who may, by Ac-  
 ‘ cident to the first in Command, come to be under  
 ‘ the same Difficulty (the Success of our Undertak-  
 ‘ ing depending, as I apprehend, on the Suddenness  
 ‘ of its Execution) that I should be glad, if it is  
 ‘ thought proper, to have a Direction; how I am to  
 ‘ act in that Case.

‘ I send this by an Officer, who will take Care to  
 ‘ deliver it safely. I am, &c. *J. Mordaunt.*  
 Right Hon. *William Pitt*,  
 Secretary of State.

A true Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt*  
 to Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated *Whitehall*, 13th *Aug-*  
*ust*, 1757 (proved by Mr. *Wood*) viz.

“ S I R,

‘ I immediately laid your Letter of the 11th Inst. at  
 ‘ Night before the King ; and am commanded by his  
 ‘ Majesty to let you know, that his Royal Intentions  
 ‘ are, that you should, by Virtue of your Commis-  
 ‘ sion, carry the Sentences of Courts Martial in ca-  
 ‘ pital Cases into Execution, during your Abode  
 ‘ within his Majesty’s Dominions, so long as the  
 ‘ Troops under your Command shall continue under  
 ‘ their present Destination, according to the King’s  
 ‘ Orders and Instructions.

‘ With regard to the supposed Case, as stated in  
 ‘ your Letter, and arising from Conversation had  
 ‘ with Sir *Edward Hawke* and Vice-Admiral *Knowles*,  
 ‘ namely, that it is possible the Fleet may be de-  
 ‘ tained in Sight of the Coast of *France* for a Week  
 ‘ or ten Days, without being able to get into the  
 ‘ Road of *Rochefort*, or off the Isle of *Aix*, during  
 ‘ which Time an Alarm will necessarily be given in  
 ‘ those Parts; in which Case you express a Desire,  
 ‘ if thought proper, to have a particular Direction,  
 ‘ how to act : I am commanded thereupon by the

B

‘ King,

‘ King, to signify to you his Majesty’s Pleasure, that  
 ‘ you, or such other Officer, on whom the Command  
 ‘ may devolve, do, in conformity to the Latitude  
 ‘ given by his Majesty’s Instructions, judge of the  
 ‘ Practicability of the Service, on the Spot, according  
 ‘ as contingent Events, and particular Circumstances  
 ‘ may require: The King judging it highly prejudi-  
 ‘ cial to the Good of his Service to give particular  
 ‘ Orders and Directions with Regard to possible con-  
 ‘ tingent Cases, that may arise.

I am, &c.

*Sir John Mordaunt.*

*W. Pitt.*’

A Letter from *Sir John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary  
*Pitt*, dated Head-Quarters, *Newport*, 20th *Augst* 1757 (the Receipt thereof being proved by  
 Mr. *Wood*, and admitted by *Sir John Mordaunt*)  
*viz.*

‘ S I R,

‘ I have the Honour of your Commands, dated  
 ‘ *Augst* 13th, and you may depend upon it, that his  
 ‘ Majesty’s Orders shall be most punctually observed.  
 ‘ Mr. *Thames*, who has long been, and now is,  
 ‘ Agent for the Transports, came here the 17th from  
 ‘ *Portsmouth*; he said, he came over on Purpose from  
 ‘ thinking it his Duty to inform me, the Transports  
 ‘ were not sufficient for the Number of Troops;  
 ‘ I own his Conversation much puzzled me, as I  
 ‘ knew our Expedition should meet with no Delay on  
 ‘ one Hand, and that the Preservation of the Soldiers  
 ‘ Healths ought, on the other, to be thought on. At  
 ‘ length I recollected two of the Commissioners of the  
 ‘ Admiralty were at *Portsmouth*, to whom I sent a  
 ‘ Letter, a Copy of which I now inclose to you:  
 ‘ Though I have since heard nothing from the Com-  
 ‘ missioners, or Mr. *Thames*, I thought it my Duty to  
 ‘ mention this Circumstance to you, being informed  
 ‘ last Night, by a Letter from *Sir Edward Hawke*,  
 ‘ that

‘ that an Express is sent to the Navy Board upon this Occasion.

‘ The Troops are in great Spirits, and wait impatiently for the Transports.

‘ I am, &c.

‘ Right Hon. *Wm. Pitt*, his *J. Mordaunt.*  
‘ Majesty’s principal Secretary of State.’

Copy of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to *Thomas Orby Hunter* and *Gilbert Elliott*, Esqrs. Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, at *Portsmouth*, dated Head-Quarters, *Newport* 17th August, 1757, Wednesday Night (being inclosed in the last mentioned Letter to Mr. *Pitt*, and as such desired to be read by Sir *John Mordaunt*, though not insisted upon as material to the present Question) viz.

‘ GENTLEMEN,

‘ Mr. *Thames*, Agent for the Transports, has just been with us, and says, he thinks it his Duty to mention, that the Transports are not sufficient to carry the Number of Troops.

‘ We send him with this Letter, that he may explain his Reasons for the Opinion he gives, and, if you find them satisfactory, we flatter ourselves some Method may be found, without occasioning Delay, to redress the Grievance.

‘ I am, Gentlemen, &c.

(Signed) *J. Mordaunt.*

‘ To *Thomas Orby Hunter* and

‘ *Gilbert Elliott*, Esqrs. Lords

‘ Commissioners of the Admiralty, at *Portsmouth.*

A Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated *Whitehall*, 5th Sept. 1757; Four o’Clock in the Afternoon the like being at the same Time wrote to Sir *Edward Hawke*, *mutatis mutandis*, proved by Mr. *Wood*) viz.



‘ S I R,

‘ The Wind having been fair for the Transports going to *Spithead*, ever since *Friday* Morning, I am to acquaint you, that his Majesty expects, with Impatience, to hear, that the Troops are embarked; but, if by any Delay the Embarkation should not be compleated, when this Letter reaches you, I am to signify to you the King’s Pleasure, that the most particular Diligence be employed in getting the Troops on Board, and proceeding, without the Loss of a Moment, to the Execution of your Orders and Instructions with regard to the Expedition under your Care.

‘ His Majesty being informed, that ten Battalions under the Orders of Sir *John Ligonier*, were all compleatly embarked at *Williamstadt* within the Course of the twenty four Hours, in which they arrived at that Place, the King expects to hear, by the Return of this Messenger, that the Fleet with the Troops under your Command on board have proceeded to Sea, in case the Wind permits, agreeable to your Orders and Instructions.

‘ I am, &c.

*W. Pitt.*

‘ P. S. The Messenger that carries this has my Orders to stay to bring an Account of the Fleet’s sailing.’

A Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Portsmouth*, 6th *September*, nine at Night (the Receipt being proved by Mr. *Wood*, and admitted by Sir *John Mordaunt*) viz.

‘ S I R,

‘ I had this Morning the Honour of yours of the 5th Instant, and can assure you, that not a Minute’s Time has been lost in embarking the Troops.

‘ Though the first of the Transports did not arrive at *Cowes*, till *Sunday* Evening, we began the Embarkation at Day-break the next Morning, and continued putting the Troops on board, till after it

‘ was

‘ was dark. We have followed the same Method to day, and by that Means I have now the Pleasure to acquaint you, that I finished the Embarkation of the last Regiment at about six this Evening.

‘ I beg you will do me the Favour to mention to his Majesty, that we were obliged to march the Troops and Baggage five Miles to the Place of Embarkation, and that we were then forced to put the Men in small Boats, in which they were rowed above a Mile, before they could embark in the Transports: Whereas at *Williamstadt* the Troops marched directly from the Quay into the Transports without the least Possibility of a Delay.

‘ It is both my Duty, and the Pride of my Heart, to execute with the utmost Dispatch and Diligence the Orders his Majesty has honoured me with, and I flatter myself a very short Time will now shew it.

‘ I am, &c.

*J. Mordaunt.*’

‘ The Right Hon. *Wm. Pitt.*’

A true Copy of a Letter from Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to Sir *John Mordaunt*, dated *Whitehall*, 15th September 1757. (the like being at the same Time wrote to Sir *Edward Hawke*, *mutatis mutandis*, being proved by Mr. *Rivers*, and admitted by Sir *John Mordaunt*.)

‘ SIR,

‘ His Majesty, by his secret Instructions, dated the 5th Day of *August* last, having directed the Return of the Troops under your Command, together with the Fleet “so as to be in *England* at, or about, as near as may be, the End of *September*, unless the Circumstances of the Forces and Ships shall necessarily require their Return sooner,” I am now to signify to you the King’s Pleasure, that you do not consider the above-mentioned Time, limited for your Return, as intended, in any Manner, to affect or interfere with the full Execution of the first and principal Object of the Expedition, namely, “attempting, as far as shall be found practicable, a Descent on the *French Coast* at or

“ near *Rockfort*, in order to attack, if practicable,  
 “ and, by a vigorous Impression, force that Place,  
 “ and to burn and destroy, to the utmost of your  
 “ Power, all Shipping, Docks, Magazines, and Ar-  
 “ senals, that shall be found there, and exert such  
 “ other Efforts, as shall be judged most proper for  
 “ annoying the Enemy.” And with regard to any  
 “ other particular Attempt, which, agreeably to your  
 “ Orders, you shall have commenced, and in the  
 “ Execution whereof you shall be actually engaged;  
 “ it is also his Majesty’s Pleasure, that you do not  
 “ desist from, or break up the same, merely and  
 “ solely on Account of the Time limited for your  
 “ Return by the Instructions above-mentioned;—but  
 “ that, notwithstanding the same, you do continue with  
 “ the Troops during such a farther Number of Days,  
 “ as may afford a competent Time for the Completion  
 “ of any Operation under the above Circumstances;  
 “ after which you are to take Care to return with the  
 “ Forces under your Command, and the Fleet, in the  
 “ Manner directed by your former Instructions.

A Paragraph of a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to  
 Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated *Ramilies, Rade de*  
*Basque*, 30th September 1757, acknowledging the  
 Receipt of the last mentioned Letter (the Receipt  
 being proved by Mr. *Wood*, and admitted by Sir  
*John Mordaunt*) viz.

“ S I R,  
 “ Last *Thursday* I had the Honour of yours of the  
 “ 15th Instant, and am pleased with thinking, that  
 “ before the Receipt of it we had judged right in  
 “ resolving to attack *L’ Isle D’ Aix*, tho’ it could not  
 “ possibly be done, without breaking in some Mea-  
 “ sure into his Majesty’s Orders in regard to the  
 “ Time of our returning to *England*.’

THREE of the Papers above-mentioned (as contain-  
 ing Intelligence proved by Mr. Secretary *Pitt* to have  
 been communicated to Sir *John Mordaunt* at several  
 Meet-

Meetings, before he went upon the Expedition) were then read, viz.

I. A Letter from Captain, now Lieutenant-Colonel, Clerk to Sir John Ligonier, dated, London, July 15th 1757.

S I R,

You have desired me to put down in writing, what I mentioned to your Excellency in regard of *Rochefort*.

In returning from *Gibraltar* in 1754, I went along

Part of the western Coast of *France* to see the Con-

ditions of some of their Fortifications of their Pla-

ces of Importance, on purpose to judge, if an

Attempt could be made with a Probability of Suc-

cess, in case of a Rupture, and of the *French*

drawing away their Troops to *Flanders*, *Italy*, and

*Germany*, in the same Manner as they did in the

last War. I had heard that *Rochefort*, tho' a Place

of the utmost Importance, had been very much

neglected. I went there, and waited upon the Go-

vernor in my Regimentals, told him, that I was

upon my Way to *England* from *Gibraltar*, and that

I came on purpose to see the Place, the Dock, and

the Men of War. He was very polite; I was

shewed every Thing, went on board ten Ships of

the Line new built, and an Engineer attended me

in going round the Place.

I was surpris'd to find, that tho' there was a

good Rampart with a Revetement, the greatest Part

of it was not flank'd but with Redans; that there

were no Out-Works, no Covert-Way, and in ma-

ny Places no Ditch, so that the Bottom of the

Wall was seen at a Distance; that in other Places,

where the Earth had been taken out to form the

Rampart, there was left about them a good Height

of Ground, which was a Disadvantage to the Place;

that for above the Length of a Front there was no

Rampart, or even Intrenchment, but as the Ground

was low and marshy at that Place, being next the

River, there were some small Ditches, which were

dry however at low Water, yet the Bottom remained muddy and slimy.

Towards the River, there was no Rampart, no Parapet, no Batteries on either Side. Towards the Land-side, there was some high Ground very nigh the Place, perhaps at the Distance of about 150 or 200 Yards.

The Engineer told me, that the Place had remained in that Condition for above 70 or 80 Years.

I got no Plan of the Place, and put nothing down in writing, for I found that the whole Town had been talking of me, and thought it very extraordinary, that I should be allowed to go about and see every Thing.

I burnt even some Sketches and Remarks I had by me upon other Places, that they might have no Hold of me, in case they searched my Baggage; and therefore could only expose themselves, as I had done nothing, but what was open, above board, and with Permission.

However, as to Utility, I was as much satisfied, as if I had got a Plan. In regard of the Profil indeed, I have thought since, that it would not have been amiss, if I had known for certain the exact Height of the Rampart: I think that it could not well exceed 25 Feet. In *Martiniere's Geographical Dictionary* it is called only 20 Feet high. Perhaps the Parapet is not included.

I told your Excellency, that I had never seen any Plan of the Place; but as there had been no Alteration in the Works for so many Years, I made no Question, but that some old Plan of it might be found, which would correspond exactly with what I said. In the *Forces de L'Europe*, which I have, there is no Plan of *Rockefort*, but I found one in the Duke of *Argyle's* Edition, which I borrowed and shewed to your Excellency. It agrees exactly with what I said, and with the Sketch I drew of it before you from my Memory, except that

“ that a regular Ditch is represented every where,  
 “ which is not the Case.

‘ The River may be about 130 Yards broad. The  
 “ Entrance is defended by two or three small Re-  
 “ doubts, which I did not see, nor could I venture  
 “ even to go down, and examine the Coast.

‘ What I mentioned to your Excellency of the  
 “ Method of insulting the Place, considering it upon  
 “ the Footing of an immediate Assault, I have not  
 “ put down; for tho’ it may be reasoned upon in a  
 “ general View, yet many Things can only be fixed  
 “ and determined immediately upon the Spot. I was  
 “ told, that there are never any Troops at *Roche fort*,  
 “ but the Marines. There might be about 1000 at  
 “ that Time.

‘ By the Expedition to Port *L’Orient* in 1746, it  
 “ appeared to me, that the Country People in Arms  
 “ are very little better than our own, and that an  
 “ Officer, who possesses himself, might march safely  
 “ from one End of a Province to another with only  
 “ five Companies of Grenadiers, where there are no  
 “ regular Troops. They imagine at first they can fight,  
 “ and their Intentions are good, till it comes to the  
 “ Point, when every Body gives Way, almost before  
 “ the firing of a Platoon.

‘ In writing this I have obeyed with Pleasure, as I  
 “ have always done, your Excellency’s Commands.

‘ I am, &c.

*Robert Clerk.*

To Sir *John Ligonier.*

II. A TRANSLATION of the Paper, intituled "Memoire sur la Force actuelle de la France, et les Services, auxquels Elle est employée dans L'Année 1757," (the same being proved by Mr. Wood to be a faithful Translation, and the Original being at the same Time laid before the Court for their Satisfaction.) viz.

## MEMORIAL

Of the actual Force of France by Land, and the Services on which it is employed in the Year 1757.

THE French Army, at the Beginning of the present Troubles, consisted only of 157,347 Men, not including the Militia and the Invalids. It was composed in the following Manner,

French

## MEMOIRE

Sur la Force actuelle de la France par Terre, et les Services auxquels elle est employée dans l'année 1757.

L'Armée Française, au Commencement des Troubles présentes, ne consistoit qu'en 157,347 Hommes, non comprise la Milice et les Invalides. Elle étoit composée de la Manière suivante ;

In-

|                       |        |                       |        |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| * French Foot         | 98,330 | Infanterie Francoise  | 98,330 |
| * Artillery           | 4,100  | Artillerie            | 4,100  |
| * Foreign Foot        | 25,589 | Infanterie Etrangere  | 25,589 |
| * King's Houſd. Horſe | 3,210  | Maiſon du Roy, Caval. | 3,210  |
| * French Horſe        | 14,520 | Cavalerie Francoise   | 14,520 |
| * Foreign Horſe       | 960    | Cavalerie Etrangere   | 960    |
| * Dragoons            | 7,680  | Dragons               | 7,680  |
| * Huſſars             | 800    | Huſſars               | 800    |
| * Light Troops        | 2,158  | Troupes Legeres,      | 2,158  |

157,347

\* In the Month of Auguſt 1755, an Augmentation was made of four Companies of 45 Men each, in every Battalion of the King's Regiment, and of four Companies of 40 Men each, in every common Battalion of French Foot, which made in all 29,620 Men.

\* About the ſame Time an Augmentation was made in the Dragoons, which made up every Regiment four Squadrons of 640 Men, making in all 2560 Men.

\* In the Month of December, of the ſame Year 1755, an Augmentation was alſo made in the Horſe of 10 Men a Company, in all 5560 Men.

\* The Royal Volunteers and Fiſcher's Corps were alſo augmented; we do not know exactly to what Number; but, according

157,347

*Au Mois d'Août 1755, on fit une Augmentation de 4 Compagnies de 45 Hommes chacune dans chaque Bataillon du Regiment du Roy, et de 4 Compagnies de 40 Hommes chacune, dans chaque Bataillon ordinaire de l'Infanterie Francoise: ce qui faiſoit en tout 29,620 Hommes.*

*Environ le meme Tems, une Augmentation ſe fit dans les Dragoons, qui porta chaque Regiment à 4 Eſcadrons de 640 Hommes montant en tout à 2,560 Hommes.*

*Au Mois de Decembre de la même Année 1755, une Augmentation ſe fit pareillement dans la Cavalerie, de 10 Hommes par Compagnie, en tout 5,560 Hommes.*

*Les Volontaires Royaux, et les corps de Fiſcher, furent auſſi augmentés; nous ne ſavons pas au juſte de combien, mais, ſelon nos Avis,*



' cording to our Advices,  
 ' this Augmentat on came  
 ' to 680 Men, or therea-  
 ' bouts. These several  
 ' Augmentations amount  
 ' to 38,420 Men; and  
 ' consequently, the French  
 ' Army (without reck-  
 ' oning the Militia and the  
 ' Invalids, which I put at  
 ' above 67,000) is com-  
 ' posed of 196,000 Men.  
 ' They have, it is true,  
 ' raised two new Regi-  
 ' ments in the Country of  
 ' Liege; but notwithstan-  
 ' ding that, their regular  
 ' Troops are under  
 ' 200,000 Men.

' The Islands of Mi-  
 ' norca and Corsica, with  
 ' the Colonies in America,  
 ' take up 25,000 Men at  
 ' least; they embarked in  
 ' the Spring, 3, or 4000  
 ' Men for different Servi-  
 ' ces in the two Indies;  
 ' Marshal d'Estrée's Ar-  
 ' my, if the Regiments  
 ' were compleat, would  
 ' amount to 92,000 Men;  
 ' Marshal Richelieu's is  
 ' 32,665; a Body of 6  
 ' or 7,000 Men must also  
 ' be reckoned, which they  
 ' are obliged to keep in  
 ' Garrison at Toulon, Mar-  
 ' seilles, Cette, Antibes, &c.  
 ' at Hand for that Part of  
 ' the Coast.

*Avis, cette Augmentation  
 alloit a 680 Hommes, ou  
 environ.*

*Toutes ces différentes Aug-  
 mentations montent à 38,420  
 Hommes; et par conséquent  
 l'Armée Française (sans  
 compter la Milice et les In-  
 valides, que je mets au delà  
 de 67 000) est composée de  
 196,000 Hommes. Ils ont,  
 a la vérité, levé deux Nou-  
 veaux Regiments dans le  
 Pais de Liege; mais mal-  
 gré tout cela, leurs Troupes  
 réglées sont au dessous de  
 deux Cent Mille Hommes.*

*Les Isles de Minorque et  
 de Corse avec les Colonies  
 en Amerique, occupent au  
 Moins 25,000 Hommes;  
 Ils ont fait embarquer, au  
 Printems, 3 à 4000 Hom-  
 mes pour differens Services  
 aux deux Indes; l'Armée  
 de Monsieur le Maréchal  
 d'Estrées, si les Regimens  
 étoient complets, iroit à  
 92,000 Hommes; celle du  
 Maréchal de Richelieu est  
 de 32,665. Il faut aussi  
 compter une Corps de 6 ou  
 7000 Hommes, qu'ils sont  
 obligés de tenir en Garnison  
 à Toulon, Marseilles, Cet-  
 te, Antibes, &c. à portée  
 de cette Partie de leur Côte.*

' Ac-

Selon

‘ According to this  
‘ Calculation then, there  
‘ are 160,000 regular  
‘ Troops employed; there  
‘ will remain about 40,000  
‘ Men for all the Garri-  
‘ sons from Sedan to the  
‘ Frontiers of *Swisserland*;  
‘ as also for those of *Rou-*  
‘ *fillon* and *Guienne*, with-  
‘ out speaking of *Flanders*  
‘ and the *Coast*.

‘ We reckon about  
‘ 20,000 Men placed  
‘ from *St. Valery* to *Bergue*;  
‘ so that we have all the  
‘ Reason to believe that  
‘ there cannot be 10,000  
‘ Men more from *St. Va-*  
‘ *lery* to *Bourdeaux*.’

*Selon ce Calcul, donc*  
*voilà 160,000 Hommes de*  
*Troupes réglées employées ;*  
*Il restera environ 40,000*  
*Hommes pour tous les Gar-*  
*nisons depuis Sedan jus-*  
*qu’aux Frontiers de la Suisse,*  
*de meme que pour celles du*  
*Rouffillon et de la Guienne,*  
*sans parler de la Flandres*  
*et de la Cote.*

*Nous comptons environ*  
*20,000 Hommes placés de-*  
*puis St. Valery jusqu’ à Ber-*  
*gue, de façon que nous avons*  
*tout lieu de croire, qu’il ne*  
*peut pas y avoir 10,000*  
*Hommes de plus, depuis St.*  
*Valery jusqu’ à Bourdeaux.*

III. THE MINUTE taken in *Arlington-street*, August  
1757, containing the Examination of *Joseph Thierry*,  
a *French* Pilot, (a Translation being at the same  
Time laid before the Court, but not offered to  
them as authentick) viz.

‘ *Arlington-street*, August 1757.

‘ Present,

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| ‘ Lord Anson,               | Mr. Secretary Pitt, |
| ‘ Sir Ed. Hawke,            | Gen. Ligonier,      |
| ‘ Lt. Gen. Sir J. Mordaunt, | Adm. Knowles,       |
| ‘ Major Gen. Conway,        | Capt. Clarke.       |
| ‘ Lord Holderness.          |                     |

‘ **L**E nommé *Joseph Thi-*  
‘ *erry* Pilote *François*,  
‘ Natif de  
‘ Protestant de  
‘ Religion, aiant été exa-  
‘ miné, dit—Qu’il a ex-  
‘ ercé le metier de Pilote  
‘ sur

TRANSLATION.  
**J**oseph Thierry a French  
Pilot, born  
of the Protef-  
tant Religion, having been  
examined, saith,—That  
he has been for above 20  
Years in the Employ-  
ment

' sur les Cotes de France  
 ' au de la de vingt ans,  
 ' qu'il a servi comme pre-  
 ' mier Pilote a bord de di-  
 ' vers vaisseaux du Roi de  
 ' France, & nommément  
 ' du Magnanime, sur le  
 ' quel il a servi pendant  
 ' l'espece de vingt et deux  
 ' Mois; qu'il a conduit  
 ' le dit vaisseaux le Mag-  
 ' nanime plusieurs Fois a  
 ' Rade de l'Isle de Aix,  
 ' et qu'il connoit bien l'en-  
 ' trée & la sortie de la dite  
 ' Rade; que le chennel  
 ' entre les Isles D'Oleron,  
 ' & de Rhé a trois lieues  
 ' de large; qu'il y a lou-  
 ' voie sur le Magnanime;  
 ' que les Bancs qu'il faut  
 ' eviter sont près de la ter-  
 ' re; qu'on en peut dis-  
 ' tinguer les Brisans a une  
 ' distance considerable;  
 ' qu'il y a une Banc nom-  
 ' mée le Boiard, dont on  
 ' me courre pas grand  
 ' risque, moiennant les  
 ' Brisans, qui annoncent sa  
 ' situation; Que pour en-  
 ' trer a la Rade d'Aix, il  
 ' n'y a pas de telles diffi-  
 ' cultés, qu'il soit neces-  
 ' saire d'avoir un Pilote  
 ' pour y conduire des  
 ' grands vaisseaux; qu'il y  
 ' a bon mouillage tant en  
 ' dedans la Rade qu'en  
 ' de-

*ment of a Pilot, on the  
 Coasts of France, and has  
 served as first Pilot on  
 Board several of the French  
 King's Ships, having been  
 for twenty-two Months on  
 Board the Magnanime,  
 which said Ship he has se-  
 veral Times brought into the  
 Road of the Isle d'Aix, and  
 knows very well how to go  
 in and out of the said Road;  
 that the Channel between  
 the Islands of Rhé and Ole-  
 ron is 3 Leagues broad, and  
 that he has turned it in  
 and out in the Magna-  
 nime. That the Shoals,  
 which are to be avoided are  
 near the Land, and the  
 Breakers are to distinguished  
 at a considerable Distance;  
 that there is a Shoal called  
 the Boiard, which is not  
 very dangerous, as the  
 Breakers shew its Situation;  
 that the Entrance into the  
 Road of Aix, is not so dif-  
 ficult as to require a Pilot  
 to bring in great Ships; that  
 there is good Anchorage  
 both within the Road, and  
 out at Sea, in 12 and 14  
 Fathom Water, quite to  
 Bayonne.*

*That*

dehors en Mer a 12 &  
14 Brasses d'eau jusqu'a  
Bayonne.

Que l'Isle de Aix a en-  
viron sept Miles d'An-  
glettre de circuit, &  
une quarantaine de Ca-  
banes, ou Maisons, ras-  
semblés dans une espece  
de village; qu'il y a une  
Batterie de vingt quatre  
a vingt six canons de 24  
lb. de Bale, mais qu'il  
n'y a point de Fortifica-  
tion; que les plus gros  
vaisseaux peuvent en ap-  
procher de bien près, &  
que le vaisseau le Mag-  
nanime seul pourroit en  
peu de temps destruire  
la dite Batterie.

Que le plus gros vais-  
seaux peuvent monter jus-  
qu'a Vergerot, a deux  
miles Angloises de l'em-  
bouchure de la Riviere  
avec leurs Canons, & E-  
quipage; que la Riviere  
est fort étroite.

Que l'on peut mettre  
du Monde a terre au nord  
d'une Batterie nommée de  
Fourras sans etre vu du  
Fort, dans une prairie,  
ou le terrain est ferme et  
uni, a la grande Portée  
des Canons des Vaisseaux.

Que de l'endroit, ou  
l'on met pied a terre, jus-  
qu'a Rochefort il y a cinq  
miles Angloises, le Che-

min

*That the Isle d'Aix is  
about seven English Miles  
in Circumference; there are  
about 40 Huts or Houses  
together in a kind of Vil-  
lage; that there is a Bat-  
tery of 24, or 26 Guns, 24  
Pounders, but that there  
is no Fortification; that the  
largest Ships may come very  
near it, and that the Mag-  
nanime, alone, might de-  
stroy the said Battery in a  
very short Time.*

*That the largest Ships  
can go up as far as Verge-  
rot, two English Miles  
from the Mouth of the Ri-  
ver, with their Guns and  
Men, that the River is very  
narrow.*

*That Men may be land-  
ed to the North of a Bat-  
tery called de Fourras, out  
of Sight of the Fort, on a  
Meadow where the Ground  
is firm and level, and with-  
in Random-Shot of the  
Ships Guns.*

*That from the Landing-  
Place to Rochefort, is five  
English Miles, the Road  
dry, and not intersected ei-  
ther*

‘ min sec, & n’est point  
 ‘ coupé par des fossés, ny  
 ‘ des marais.

‘ Que la ville est presque  
 ‘ entourrée par un ram-  
 ‘ part, mais que l’endroit,  
 ‘ qui aboutit a la Riviere  
 ‘ des deux cotés, il n’y a  
 ‘ point de mur l’espace de  
 ‘ soixante pas, quin’est fer-  
 ‘ mé simplement que par  
 ‘ une Barriere ou Palisade,  
 ‘ et que le terrain pour  
 ‘ aborder les dites Pali-  
 ‘ sades n’est coupé d’ au-  
 ‘ cun Fossé.’

*ther by Ditches, or Morass.*

*That the City is almost  
 surrounded with a Ram-  
 part, but that on both Sides,  
 in that Place which ends at  
 the River there is no Wall  
 for the Length of sixty Pa-  
 ces, the Inclosure being only  
 a Bar or Palisade, and the  
 Ground to come up to the  
 Palisade is not intersected  
 by any Fossé.*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT CLERK who  
 was employed as principal Engineer on the Ex-  
 pedition, being sworn and questioned, Whether he  
 was at any Time at *Rochefort*?

*Answered, Yes, in the Year 1754.*

Q. Whether he at any Time wrote a Letter to  
 Sir *John Ligonier* touching the State or Strength of  
*Rochefort*?

A. He did in the Month of *July* last.

The Letter before read, which bears date the 15th  
 of *July* 1757, being shewn to him, he said, that the  
 same is of his Writing, and is the Letter he now re-  
 fers to; the Contents of which he remembers per-  
 fectly.

Being desired to disclose to the Court any Matter,  
 other than contained in the said Letter, which he  
 judges material for the Information of the Court, as  
 tending to shew the Practicability or Impracticability  
 of an Attack upon *Rochefort*, so far as the same was  
 communicated to Sir *John Mordaunt*;

He deposed, that on the 26th of *September* last  
 he went to the Isle of *Aix* to examine some of the  
 principal Officers of the Fort, to see if he could  
 procure from them any Information in Regard to

*Rochefort.*

*Rockefort.* He examined two or three at first, but found they would give him no distinct Answer, on which he resolved to dine with them, and pass the Day.—After Dinner, he told them, that he had spoke to two or three of the Company in Regard to the Strength of *Rockefort* and other Places on the Coast, but that they seemed very much afraid of giving him the smallest Degree of Information, but: that their Caution was needless, as he knew the State of those Places as well as any of them: On which he took out his Pencil, and drew a slight Sketch first of *Rockelle*, describing its weak Parts, and then began and described in the same Manner the Town of *Rockefort*. He did not immediately ask their Opinions to confirm what he had said, but took the Engineer with him, who was one of the Company, and walked round the Fort; and in the Way told him, that there had been a Dispute between him and one of his Acquaintance, who knew nothing of the Place, but by Hearsay, whether Water could be thrown round the Town of *Rockefort*, and the Ditch filled: The Engineer answered, it was impossible, upon Account of the Heighth of some Parts of the Ground: The Engineer added, that he had often been at *Rockefort*, but that he could not give so particular an Account of it, as he had done; for he had not examined it with the greatest Attention, having always considered it, as an open-Place.—This Circumstance, he (Lieut. Col. Clerk) communicated to Sir *John Mordaunt* the next Day (being the 27th) at 9 o'Clock in the Morning, and likewise to Major General *Conway*, as they were walking together on the Top of the Donjon over the Gateway of the Fort at the Isle of *Aix*. The Answer Sir *John Mordaunt* gave him at the Time was, that he was of Opinion, no Credit could be given to what a *French* Engineer said on such a Subject, and asked the Deponent, if he was in the *French* Engineer's Situation, whether he would have given any Information of that kind: He

C

replied,

replied, " Different Men have different Characters ;  
" for my Part I believe him."

Being asked, Whether he was sent by Sir *John Mordaunt* to the Isle of *Aix* at this Time to get Information ?

*Answered*, No ; not at this Time.

Asked, Whether he had any Recommendation to the Governor of *Roche fort*, which procured him the Civility he met with in being permitted to view every Thing ?

*Answered*, No ; that he appeared in his Regimentals openly ; that he has travelled a great deal in *France*, and always in his Regimentals, and never was refused seeing any Place, but once at *Cette*, and that by a very particular Man, who refused the Ladies Permission to walk in the Gardens.

Being questioned (at the Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*) What is meant by the Expression of " a Front" used in his Letter ?

*Answered*, He reckons it at a common Medium ; thinks 320 or 300 Yards.

Q. If an able *French* Engineer had as many Workmen as he wanted at *Roche fort*, how long it would take to throw up such an Entrenchment, as would make it equally secure, against a *Coup de Main*, with the rest of the Works ?

A. Every Body knows the Difficulty of answering a Question of this Kind, as it depends much on the Nature of the Ground ; likewise, what may be the Opinion of a very able Engineer, much superior to what he pretends to be, might not entirely agree with his Sentiments ; for his Part, he reckons, that Rampart was constructed in so absurd a Manner, and the Circumstance of the Ditch such, that he imagines it not impossible, that such an Entrenchment might be thrown up, so as to put it on a Footing with the rest of the Place in a few Days Time ; he cannot answer the Question with more Precision.

It being Three o'Clock, *Adjourned* till Tomorrow Morning 10 o'Clock.

*Thursday,*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1757.

THE COURT being met pursuant to Adjournment,

Lieutenant Colonel *Clerk* was again called in, and questioned, as mention is made in his Evidence of the Height of some Part of the Ground,—Whether the Inequality of the Ground at *Rockefort* is such, that any part of the Ditch must be considerably above High Water Mark?

*Answered*, He conceives, the upper Part is considerably higher, than the High-Water Mark; though it is very difficult to judge of the Level of Ground with the Eye.

Q. Whether he made any Enquiry into the State of *Rockefort*, after their Arrival in the *Basque* Road, before the 25th of September?

A. On the 24th, he was sent by Sir *John Mordaunt* from the *Ramilies*, which was lying in the Road of *Basque*, to the Isle of *Aix*, to examine what Prisoners he could find, who had been at *Rockefort*; and, at the same Time to reconnoitre the Point, which runs out from *Fouras*: He went to the Island, where he found Captain *Hamilton*, Aid de Camp to Major General *Conway*; who told him, that Major General *Conway* had taken such Prisoners, as he found capable of giving any satisfactory Account, on Board Ship with him; upon which, after speaking to some of the Prisoners, and not receiving any Satisfaction, and giving himself the less Trouble, as Major General *Conway* had done that Part already, he went on Board a Ship; and, after Dinner, asked Captain *How* to go along with him to reconnoitre the Point of *Fouras*; and proposed to him to go on Shore, which was agreed to: They went accordingly, as did also Mr. *Boyd* and Mr. *Williams*; and after walking a Couple of Miles over a spongy Neck of Land, which is overflowed at High-Water, they came upon the solid Continent, when he thought it not proper to proceed any farther; lest, if they ventured beyond the



Neck of Land, they might be surrounded, or cut off. They saw *Fouras* distinctly, that is to say, the Walls; they could not see the Fortifications, as they viewed it by Moon-light, and believes, upwards of an *English* Mile distant; they also saw a Fire, like the Flash of a Pan, about a Mile off, which made him propose to return on Board Ship: Mr. *Boyd* said, he heard a Fuzee go off; but the Deponent cannot say, he did:—They heard afterwards, from a Battery or Redoubt, (which is called Fort *d'Aiguille*) a Beating to Arms; they heard it very distinctly; but he cannot say at what Distance.

Q. If he can recollect, how the Wind was at that Time?

A. It was perfectly calm.

Q. Did he make any Observations in that Walk?

A. He don't remember any thing of Consequence; he reported it next Morning to Sir *John Mordaunt*.

Q. Whereabouts he went on Shore?

A. At the Point of Land called *Isle Denis*; it runs out from Fort *Pouras*.

Q. Did he land immediately on the Shore?

A. They landed on a Rock, between which Rock and the solid Continent is the spongy Ground he has spoken of.

Q. When did he leave *Gibraltar*?

A. In *September 1753*.

Q. As he mentions in his Letter having been at *Rockefort* in the Year 1754; Whether he has at any Time in the Interval of three Years, between that and 1757, mentioned the Observations he made there?

A. He has spoke of them to one or two People, who, he believes, may have mentioned them; and indeed, he spoke of them with an Intention they should be mentioned. The Letter to Sir *John Ligonier* was wrote by Sir *John's* Order, and arose from some Conversation, which had before passed on the Subject, Sir *John* desiring him to put his Observations in Writing.

Q. Whe-

Q. Whether he had any Discourse with Sir *John Ligonier*, in relation to *Rocheport*, before *July 1757*. being the Month, in which his Letter is dated ?

A. He does not know, that he mentioned any Thing of *Rocheport* to Sir *John Ligonier* in particular, before *July 1757*.

Q. (By *Desire* of Sir *John Mordaunt*) Could he observe any Bank or Dyke at *Rocheport*, which separated the dry Fosse from the wet one ?

A. He remembers none ; he is absolutely clear in his Opinion, it was impossible to let the Water in all round.

Q. (by the Court.) Whether if he had been in *Rocheport*, and the Defence of the Place had been left to him, as an Engineer, and he had had ten Days Notice of a Force marching up, he could have put it in a sufficient Posture of Defence against a *Coup de Main* ?

A. No ; but that depends greatly upon the Number of the Garrison. He explained, that, what he understands by a *Coup de Main* is taking a Place in one, two, three, or four Days Time, without a regular Attack.

Q. Could it have been attacked without opening Trenches ?

A. Yes.

Q. Had they scaling Ladders with them ?

A. They had scaling Ladders 30 Feet high ; and the Ramparts at *Rocheport* were but 25 Feet at the highest, taking in the Parapet ; for in his Letter to Sir *John Ligonier* he put down every thing at the highest.

Q. If *Rocheport* could not have been taken under three or four Days, whether Artillery would not have been necessary to facilitate the taking of the Place ?

A. Undoubtedly, Artillery would have been proper ; but perhaps not absolutely necessary.

Q. Had they such Artillery ?

A. They had Artillery for that Purpose ; and as much, as he judged proper, viz. Six 24 Pounds,

and four 12 Pounders, together with spare Carriages.

Q. Does he think the Artillery could have been landed with tolerable Ease?

A. He thinks, very easily, at *Chatelaillon Bay*.

Q. Whether that is on the *Rockefort* Side of the *Charente*?

A. Yes.

Q. How near could the Transports come, in order to land the Troops?

A. The Report of the Rear-Admiral and Captains of Men of War answers that Question.

Q. (At Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire) What Day he made himself Master of the Nature of the Coast?

A. The first he heard of the Report of the Rear-Admiral and Captains was from Captain *Buckle* on the 25th; and he was afterwards more fully informed on the 28th, and in the Way home.

Q. Does what he says, in regard to landing the Artillery, arise from an Opinion he formed upon the Spot, or what he has heard since?

A. He formed that Opinion on the Spot; on any sandy Beach, he imagines, wherever Troops can land, Artillery can be landed.

Q. Was he ever present and assisting at the Attack of any Place?

A. He was at the Siege of *Bergen-op-zoom*, a Volunteer, and taken Prisoner the Day of the Assault; he was also at *Port l'Orient*, Engineer in Ordinary, which now gives the Rank of Captain; and went a Volunteer with Sir *John Mordaunt* to *Ostend*, but they did not arrive, till after the Siege; he saw the Attack, and was afterwards in the Trenches.

COLONEL JAMES WOLFE, (employed as Quarter-Master-General on the Expedition) being sworn, and desired to declare whatever he knows material for the Information of the Court, tending to shew the Practicability, or Impracticability, of a Descent on the *French Coast*, in Order to an Attack upon *Rockefort* at any Time while the Expedition was on Foot, — Deposed, That Sir *John Mordaunt* sent  
Colonel

Colonel *Howard*, Lieutenant-Colonel *Murray*, and himself, on the 29th of *September*, to view the Bay of *Chatelaillon*. They went first on board the *Viper* Sloop, which anchored nearest to the Land, and had but a very imperfect View of the Land from thence; Colonel *Howard* in particular had a good deal of Conversation with the Captain of the Sloop, with regard to the Observations he had made. Not thinking they saw any thing distinctly enough from thence to make a Report upon, they went in a Boat, and rowed within the great Bay of *Chatelaillon*, within a Mile and a half of the Coast, being as near as they could venture with Safety; and the Report they made to Sir *John Mordaunt*, when they returned was, that they had not seen any Entrenchments, Redoubts, Batteries, or Troops, to prevent their landing in the great Bay of *Chatelaillon*: That they had seen six Pieces of Artillery upon the Point of *Chatelaillon*, and that the Sand Hills on the Shore were high enough to conceal the Motions of any Troops behind them (even Horse he believes) from Boats rowing to the Shore. They further reported, what Information they had received from the Captain of the *Viper*, namely, That some Days before that, he had seen a Number of Men on the Coast with Colours (but the Captain could not ascertain the Number) marching from the Side of *Rochelle* to the great Bay of *Chatelaillon*, down to the left of the Point, and that those Men had been working in the Sand Hills three or four Days, he is not sure which, and had changed the Form of them.—He added, that before they went out of the *Viper*, they saw some Guards, or Posts, upon the Shore of the lesser Bay, just upon the Edge of the Coast.

Being asked, Whether their Report was made previous, or subsequent, to the Resolution taken of returning to *England*?

Answered, It was made about Five o'Clock in the Evening of the 29th; he cannot say, whether before or after that Resolution, as he does not know at what Time of the Day that Resolution was taken.

Being asked, Whether ever he was sent out to reconnoitre before the 29th?

Answered, That he was not sent out to reconnoitre before; but went out by Sir *John Mordaunt's* Leave, rather than being sent, about one o'Clock of the 23d, during the Attack of the Isle of *Aix*, and came to the Fort a little while after it surrendered. He landed, and got upon the Ramparts, and from thence viewed *Fouras* and the Land about it; he stayed as little while as he could, and then returned immediately to the *Ramilies*, which was anchored at a considerable Distance from the Isle of *Aix*, and made a Sort of a Report, of what he had observed, to Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt*. He mentioned the Situation of *Fouras*, as it appeared to him, and took Notice of what he thought to be the Strength of it, to the Admiral and the General, which he was induced to do, as nobody else within his Knowledge had done it, and took the Liberty of saying to Sir *Edward Hawke*, that he believed, if the Depth of Water would allow of coming near enough, a Ship would batter it down very easily, or at least would so far take the Fire of the Fort upon the Ship, that the Troops might very safely land round about it;—what he spoke of the Land on the other Side of the Fort was from Conjecture only. Sir *Edward Hawke* at that Time seemed to embrace the Proposal with a great deal of Warmth, and Sir *John Mordaunt* so far approved of it, that he has been told, that Sir *John* and the other Generals the next Day made the Proposal in a more formal Manner to the Flag-Officers.—The Deponent believes, he said to Sir *Edward Hawke*, that, as he supposed, the Pilot of the *Magnanime* could very well inform him of the Depth of Water; and as the Admirals and Generals did not appear to disapprove of his speaking upon that Point, he just hinted to Sir *Edward Hawke*, that it might not be amiss to cause some Diversion on the Side of *Rochelle*, to divide the Enemy's Attention, which he apprehended might be done by means of the Bomb-ketches; he mentions  
this

this particularly, as Sir *Edward* had so far agreed to it, that he sent both for the Pilot and the Bomb-ketches up from the Isle of *Aix* that Night, as he believes, the Deponent having suggested to him his Opinion, that there was not a Moment's Time to be lost.—The next Morning the Deponent, not having been able himself to see the Ground on the other Side *Fouras*, spoke to the Pilot, and asked him some Questions concerning that Ground, particularly, whether a Body of Men, being conveyed in Boats or Cutters, could be landed during the supposed Attack by Sea, between *Fouras* and Fort *la Pointe*, so as to cut off the Communication from *Rochefort*. The Pilot seemed clearly to understand his Notion of the Attack, and of landing at the same Time on both Sides the Fort, and told the Deponent he could, or believed he could, (he cannot say positively which) take the *Magnanime* up to batter the Fort; as also, that the landing between *Fouras* and *la Pointe* was very practicable, supposing the Fort to be attacked, as proposed, at the same Time.

Being asked, at the Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*, whether, on the Evening of the 23d, Sir *Edward Hawke* did not tell him, that he intended the next Morning to send up a Ship to batter *Fouras*?

Answered, He understood Sir *Edward Hawke's* Intentions to be such.

Asked, (by the Court) What Number of Men he apprehends could have been landed in the Boats?

Answered, In all the Boats of the Fleet he conceives 22 or 23 Hundred Men; he means, Infantry.

Asked, (by Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*) What Number of Troops, under a good Officer, might have been sufficient to prevent their Landing in *Chateillon* Bay out of Boats?

Answered, This is only Matter of Opinion, and depends intirely on the Goodness of the Officer; but according to his Notions, he should imagine a thousand regular good Foot, and two or three hundred Horse,

Horse, exclusive of Artillery, would make it very difficult for 22 or 23 Hundred Men to land there.

Asked, (by the Court) when the Men were in the Boats, how far had they to row to Land?

Answered, The Transports were anchored at different Distances; they were, one with another, about four or five Miles from the Shore.

Asked, In what Boats the Men were intended to be landed?

Answered, In the Long boats of the Men of War and Transports, which must have been towed by the Row-boats and Pinnaces, as the Wind was off Shore, on the 28th. When the Wind was fair, he believes it might be possible to set Sail for the Purpose of landing.—The Transports had each of them a Long-boat, and most of them two or three rowing Boats.

Asked, How near he was at any Time to Fort Fouras?

Answered, The nearest Distance he ever was to Fort Fouras was on the *Doujeon* at the Isle of *Aix*, which is about five Miles from the Fort, as he judges.

Asked, How near the Sand Hills were to the Water?

Answered, They seemed to be pretty near at High Water; they are, as they say, about Fifty Yards from High-Water Mark.

Asked, At what Distance the landing could be made from the Six Pieces of Artillery mentioned in his Evidence?

Answered, That it depends on the navigating of the Boats; but he conceives it possible to land intirely out of the Reach of that Artillery.

Asked, How does he compute the 22 or 23 hundred Men, which he supposes could have been landed at once?

Answered, Sir *John Mordaunt*, by his Orders on the 28th, had provided, that the Boats should not be too much crowded; and the Deponent took some Pains to enquire, how many Men had been embarked,

ed, and how many were intended to be embarked; and from thence he made this Calculation, but cannot pretend to be exact.

REAR-ADMIRAL THOMAS BRODRICK being sworn, was asked, What Day the Fleet, sent out upon the Expedition, arrived off the Coast of France? Answered, Thinks, the 20th.

Q. What Day they got within the *Basque Road*?

A. The 22d or 23d; thinks the 23d; the Attack of the Isle of *Aix* was made the same Day.

Q. Whether he was at any Time sent out to reconnoitre, and make Soundings?

A. He was sent out the 23d in the Afternoon by Sir *Edward Hawke*, and was upon that Service all Night, and continued upon it, he thinks, till 3 or 4 o'Clock the Afternoon following, when he returned, and immediately made his Report to Sir *Edward Hawke*.

A PAPER, purporting to be a Copy of the said Report, being produced and shewn to Rear-Admiral *Brodrick*, he perused and considered the same, and informed the Court, that he believes it to be an exact Copy of the Report made by him to Sir *Edward Hawke*, jointly with the three Captains sent with him upon that Service, which was then read in Words following:

‘ In Pursuance of an Order from Sir *Edward Hawke*,  
 ‘ Knight of the Bath, Admiral of the blue Squadron of his Majesty’s Fleet, &c. Dated the 23d  
 ‘ of September, 1757;

‘ **W**E the under written went and sounded the  
 ‘ French Shore from *Rochelle* to Fort *Fouras*,  
 ‘ and find as follows.

‘ From the fourth Point of the Entrance of *Rochelle*,  
 ‘ (on which Point there are 27 Guns mounted on *Barbet*) to the Point of the *Angelin*, we find it a rocky  
 ‘ Shore, and steep Cliffs, with Shoals near two Miles  
 ‘ off; from *Angelin* to *Chatelaillon*, we find a fair, hard,  
 sandy,



‘ sandy Beach, with a Flat lying off near two Miles,  
 ‘ having but three Fathom at High Water at that  
 ‘ Distance, but clear Ground, along which Beach  
 ‘ are Sand Hills about Fifty Yards from the Top of  
 ‘ High Water. On the Point of *Cbatellaillon* are two  
 ‘ Guns on Barber, which can no Ways annoy the  
 ‘ landing of the Troops in the Bays of either Side of  
 ‘ it; and off which Point runs a Riff of Rocks West  
 ‘ two Miles, which are dry at low Water; and  
 ‘ round the said Point, about half a Mile to the  
 ‘ Eastward, there is a small sandy Bay near half a  
 ‘ Mile long, and the Land over the said Bay rises  
 ‘ with an easy Ascent about a Quarter of a Mile to a  
 ‘ Church or Convent, with a few Houses near it;  
 ‘ from the sandy Bay, along to a square Fort on the  
 ‘ south Part of the Bay, lies a long flat Mud, which  
 ‘ is dry near two Miles at low Water.

‘ It is our general Opinion, the Transports cannot  
 ‘ come nearer to either of the foresaid Bays (in order  
 ‘ to land Troops) than a Mile and an half, as we  
 ‘ found three Fathoms only at that Distance at High  
 ‘ Water.

‘ The square Fort on the south Side of the Bay we  
 ‘ could only see two Sides of; the Face to the North-  
 ‘ West had nine Embrazures, and that to the North-  
 ‘ East only two.

‘ Given under our Hands, on board his Majes-  
 ‘ ty’s Ship *Ramilies* in *Basque Road*, this 24th  
 ‘ of September, 1757.

‘ THOMAS BRODRICK.

‘ JAMES DOUGLAS.

‘ PET. DENNIS.

‘ MATT. BUCKLE.”

Rear-Admiral *Brodrick* being asked, as the Report  
 only mentions Transports, how near the Men of  
 War could come to the Shore?

Answered, In his Opinion, not nearer than Two  
 Miles.

I

Q. What

Q. What Sort of landing there was for Boats, in the great Bay of *Chatelaillon*?

A. It was a fair sandy Bay, hard Ground, and a landing might have been made with Ease, in his Opinion.

Q. Whether he saw any Troops to obstruct the landing, had it been attempted soon after his Return from the Soundings?

A. When he was sounding, he did observe Troops to the Northward of the Bay of *Chatelaillon*, to the best of his Judgment, about four or five hundred Foot drawn up on a Hill, and in the Bottom, to the Northward of the Hill, were about one hundred and fifty Horse, as near as he could judge.

Q. How far, according to the best Information he received, is the great Bay of *Chatelaillon* from *Roche-fort*?

A. It is about 9 Miles, as he was told, from *Roche-fort*, and 9 Miles from *Rochelle*; but cannot take upon himself to say, it is so.

Q. (By Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*) Could the Men of War have covered the Landing and the Retreat?

A. He don't think they could do either the one, or the other.

Q. Does he think, separated as the Fleet then was, considering the Wind and Tide, (of which Circumstances he is the most proper Judge) that all the necessary Preparations could have been made, so as to have effected the landing that Night?

A. He does not think, they could.

Q. (By the Court) Could he, by the help of a Glass, observe how the Troops were cloath'd, whether in Regimentals, or otherwise?

A. They were at too great a Distance to discover that.

Q. What Number of Men, in his Opinion, not crowding the Boats, could have been landed together?

A. It

*A.* It was generally thought, in all the Boats, they could have landed from fifteen to eighteen hundred Men; they put but very few in the Boats, that were to tow the Long-boats; but this is only Matter of Opinion; he cannot possibly ascertain the direct Number.

*Q.* In case 1800 Men were put on board the Boats; whether he does not imagine there would be a considerable Distance of Time between the disembarking the first Men, and the last of the same Embarkation?

*A.* He should have thought it his Duty to have contrived so, as that all the Boats should have landed together.

*Q.* Supposing it moderate Weather, (upon the 25th of *September* for Instance, if that was such Weather) what would have been the Distance of Time between the first and second Disembarkation?

*A.* He cannot pretend to say; he never considered it in moderate Weather; and as to the 25th of *September*, he cannot particularly recollect, how the Weather was that Day.—On the Night of the 28th, in which Preparation was made for landing, it would have taken at least six Hours; but not near so much in good Weather.

THE EVIDENCE in Support of the Charge being rested here, Sir *JOHN MORDAUNT* was told it was now Time to make his Defence; who informed the Court, that he had caused some Thoughts to be put in Writing, which, as he had an Hesitation in his Voice, he prayed the Court would permit to be read; and the same were read accordingly, as follows, *viz.*

“ My LORD,

“ His Majesty was pleased to confer upon me the  
“ Command of the Land-Forces appointed to co-  
“ operate with a Squadron of Ships of War, com-  
“ manded by Sir *Edward Hawke*, to be employed  
“ upon the late Expedition: The Enterprize proved  
“ ineffectual. Soon after my Return I was sum-  
“ moned

“ moved to appear before a Board of General Officers, whom his Majesty had appointed to enquire into the Causes of the Failure of the Expedition.

“ I appeared upon the Enquiry, and was considered as a Person accused, and from whom a Defence was expected.

“ The Enquiry had all the Appearance of a Public Trial, except in two Circumstances,—The Witnesses were not examined upon Oath, and I, who stood accused, was examined; which Examination might, in its Tendency, produce, if the Case would bear it, a Charge against myself.

“ I am now called upon in a Court-Martial to answer to a general Charge of Disobedience of his Majesty's Orders. No Intimation was given me, to what particular Instances of Disobedience it would be applied.

“ I do not complain of these Proceedings; my own Conduct gives me nothing to apprehend; and his Majesty's Government is incapable of Oppression.

“ I am not sensible, that any Error, I am sure, no Act of Disobedience will be found in my Share of the Transaction.

“ I am now accused of Disobedience of the secret Instructions. It is a criminal Disobedience that is imputed to me, and a criminal Disobedience implies a positive Direction.

“ It is upon this Ground, that the Prosecutor has proceeded; and in order to make out the Charge, there have been produced certain Papers and Witnesses, which ought to be considered in two Lights.

“ —1<sup>st</sup>. Some relating to a Transaction previous to the Expedition, as Colonel Clerk's Letter, the Pilot's Examination, the Paper relating to the French Forces, and the Evidence of Mr. Secretary Pitt.

“ These are only introductory, and the Ground of the Equipment, and prior to the Instructions; and therefore although they are sufficient to shew the

“ Reasons

“ Reasons, why the Administration sent out the Fleet  
 “ and Forces, yet such Evidence can never be ap-  
 “ plied to prove a subsequent Disobedience to poste-  
 “ rior Orders; and that this Reasoning is just, ap-  
 “ pears from the very Article on which the Charge  
 “ is founded.

“ For notwithstanding the Ministers were possessed  
 “ of all this Evidence, and acted upon it, yet my  
 “ Instructions were not positive; but the Operations  
 “ were expressly left to what should be discovered of  
 “ the Practicability of the Attempt.

“ The second Sort of Evidence was by some Wit-  
 “ nesses to prove, That in Fact there was sufficient  
 “ Ground newly discovered, after the Fleet got into  
 “ the *Rade de Basques*, to shew that the Attempt  
 “ upon *Roche fort*, mentioned in the Instructions, was  
 “ practicable.

“ This Sort of Evidence has been carried down to  
 “ the Morning of the 29th of *September*, and no  
 “ later.

“ The Evidence under this second Head is the  
 “ only Evidence, that can legally and justly be ap-  
 “ plied to prove the Charge against me.

“ That Evidence consists of Colonel *Clerk*’s Ac-  
 “ count of a Conversation with a *French Engineer*  
 “ upon the 26th of *September* in the Afternoon.

“ Whether the Evidence of this single *French En-*  
 “ gineer deserved the Weight, which the Prosecutor  
 “ seems to lay on it, will appear very clearly when  
 “ I have opened my Defence, and the Court is fully  
 “ possessed of all the Facts relative to this Subject.

“ In the mean Time this may be observed, That  
 “ Colonel *Clerk*, the Chief Engineer in the Expe-  
 “ dition, produced no new Intelligence ’till the 27th,  
 “ altho’ he arrived on the 23d, was examined at the  
 “ Council of War on the 25th, procured this Ac-  
 “ count on the 26th, and did not communicate it  
 “ till the 27th.

“ Colonel *Wolfe*’s Evidence is confined altogether  
 “ to the Observations he made upon the 29th in

“ Con-

“ Consequence of the Orders I had given him to  
 “ examine the Coast ; and what was done upon the  
 “ 29th will appear to the Court, and be accounted  
 “ for hereafter.

“ Thus much may be here observed, That we had  
 “ unanimously determined upon the 28th to attempt  
 “ a Descent in the Bay of *Chatelaillon*. The At-  
 “ tempt was disappointed, and not renewed for the  
 “ Reasons that will be mentioned, when I come to  
 “ that Part of my Defence.

“ A Memorandum has been delivered in by the  
 “ Secretary of State, shewing the Number of the  
 “ Land-Forces in *France* in 1757. By that it ap-  
 “ pears, (allowing the Account to be just) that  
 “ 40,000 Regular Troops remain at Home for the  
 “ Defence of their Country, which are supposed to  
 “ be distributed in such a Manner, that only 10,000  
 “ are left to guard the whole Coast from *St. Valeri*  
 “ to *Bayonne*. 'Tis evident from reading the Pa-  
 “ per itself, that the Distribution of the Regular  
 “ Troops is Matter of Guess and Computation, not  
 “ of Intelligence. Besides the Regular Troops, it  
 “ is allowed that there are 67,000 Militia, Invalids,  
 “ &c. which are not accounted for.

“ A few Reflections will suffice to shew the Weak-  
 “ ness of this Reasoning. In the first Place, Why  
 “ should the Court of *France* place 30,000 Regular  
 “ Troops in Garrisons, where they have nothing  
 “ to fear ? For Instance, on the Frontiers next the  
 “ Dominions of the Empress, who is entirely at  
 “ their Mercy ; or on the Coast of the *Mediterranean*,  
 “ where they have no Descent to fear from a Fleet  
 “ that has no Land-Forces on board ; or on the Bor-  
 “ ders of *Spain*, with whom they are at Peace, and  
 “ but too well allied, only to leave her Coast in the  
 “ Channel exposed to our Fleets, who are profess-  
 “ edly watching for an Opportunity of insulting them.  
 “ Why might not the 67,000 Militia, who appear  
 “ to have nothing else to do, be employed in guard-  
 “ ing the Coast ? And we must take care not to  
 “ .D form

“ form a Notion of their Militia from our own.  
 “ Many Regiments of them have seen Service in the  
 “ Field; most of them have been in Garrison. Two  
 “ Regiments of the Militia were employed in the  
 “ Siege of *Offend*. Now why might not 30,000 of  
 “ them be placed in the Frontier Garrisons, where  
 “ no Enemy was apprehended, and an equal Num-  
 “ ber of Regulars be drawn down to the Coasts?  
 “ These along with the rest would form a Body of  
 “ 40,000 regular Troops, and 37,000 Militia to  
 “ guard the Coast against our Ten Battalions. This  
 “ Measure, which we suppose them to have taken,  
 “ was prudent, obvious, and practicable. The Pre-  
 “ parations we were making in *England*, pointed out  
 “ to them the Expediency of it, and the Delays that  
 “ attended our Preparations allowed them Time to  
 “ execute it.

“ Here the Prosecutor has thought fit to rest his  
 “ whole Charge and close his Accusation.

“ And in order to shew the Weakness of it, the  
 “ Court will consider the Instructions, under which  
 “ I took the Command, and the Circumstances un-  
 “ der which I was obliged to form my Judgment.

“ The Instructions have been read, and it is the  
 “ second Article alone, by which the Charge against  
 “ me is to be supported. But besides this Article,  
 “ the fifth Article of the Instructions is equally ma-  
 “ terial, and deserving the Attention of the Court.

“ The Words of the second Article are exceed-  
 “ ingly plain, and shew, that I did not set out un-  
 “ der peremptory, positive Orders, but that every  
 “ Attempt was left contingent to be determined ac-  
 “ cording to the Practicability to be judged of upon  
 “ the Spot. I say, to be judged of upon the Spot,  
 “ because it is very material to remark, That it  
 “ was not judged of, or determined upon here at  
 “ Home.

“ The Court will also observe, who was the Per-  
 “ son to judge; certainly the Commander in Chief.  
 “ But as in a Case of so much Importance, his Ma-  
 “ jesty

“ jesty thought it proper to assist that Commander  
 “ with a Council to be composed, as in the fifth Ar-  
 “ ticle, I may confidently assert, that the Judge-  
 “ Advocate will not contend, that I could disobey  
 “ his Majesty’s Instructions by taking the Assistance  
 “ of a Council so appointed.

“ It could not be Disobedience to doubt.

“ It could not be Disobedience to desire Assistance  
 “ to clear up that Doubt.

“ If it was possible for the Court to hesitate upon  
 “ the proper Sense of these Instructions, Mr. Se-  
 “ cretary Pitt’s Letter of the 13th of *August* makes  
 “ it clear to a Demonstration ; in which he says,  
 “ He is commanded to signify his Majesty’s Pleasure,  
 “ That you should, in Conformity to the Latitude  
 “ given by his Majesty’s Instructions, judge of the  
 “ Practicability of the Service upon the Spot, ac-  
 “ cording as the contingent Events and particular  
 “ Circumstances may require.’

“ If this could require further Explanation, what  
 “ arises upon the third Article of Instructions re-  
 “ lative to *Port l’Orient* would establish it.

“ The Direction to attack *Port l’Orient* is expressed  
 “ in the same Manner as the second Article, with  
 “ regard to *Rochefort*, that is,” ‘ If it should be  
 “ judged practicable.’

“ Yet it will appear, that one of the Generals men-  
 “ tioning the State of *Port l’Orient* to Mr. Pitt, Mr.  
 “ Pitt said, That though *Port l’Orient* was named  
 “ amongst other Places to be attacked, the Instruc-  
 “ tions were not meant to confine me, but that I was  
 “ left to my Discretion to attempt it, or not, as I  
 “ thought proper.

“ Under these Instructions, and with this Latitude,  
 “ I took the Command of the Land-Forces, and be-  
 “ fore I produce to the Court that Judgment, which  
 “ was formed upon the Practicability upon the Spot,  
 “ I must desire your Attention, whilst I state the Cir-  
 “ cumstances under which it was necessary for me to  
 “ determine.



“ The only Place for landing the Forces, which  
 “ had ever been mentioned, or come under Con-  
 “ sideration in *England*, was a Spot near Fort *Fouras*;  
 “ that was the Place mentioned by the *French* Pilot.  
 “ His was the only Information of any Place to land  
 “ at, at all : With the View of landing there, we set  
 “ out ; but when we came there, we found a Fort  
 “ erected upon the very Spot, of which he appeared  
 “ to have no Knowledge.

“ Upon the 23d the Isle of *Aix* was taken, and  
 “ that same Evening Sir *Edward Hawke* declared his  
 “ Intentions to bombard *Rockelle*, and lay up a Ship  
 “ to batter the Fort of *Fouras*, and he sent for the  
 “ Pilot of the *Magnanime* to inform himself con-  
 “ cerning the best Manner of doing it ; and the Con-  
 “ versation of this Evening was upon taking the Fort,  
 “ and upon the Method of landing the Troops.

“ Early in the Morning of the 24th the Pilot of  
 “ the *Magnanime* came on board the *Ramilies*, and  
 “ was examined in the Presence of Sir *Edward Hawke*  
 “ and Admiral *Knowles* ; he then said, He would  
 “ undertake to bring up the *Barfleur*, or the *Magna-*  
 “ *nime*, within a Quarter of a Mile of Fort *Fouras*,  
 “ Sir *Edward Hawke* approved of the Proposal, and  
 “ said, ‘ That will do.’

“ The same Morning Major General *Conway* came  
 “ on board the *Ramilies*, when we considered of a  
 “ Plan he had concerted for the landing of the  
 “ Troops near *Fouras*, whilst the Ships were em-  
 “ ployed to silence the Cannon of the Fort, and  
 “ Feints were to be made in another Part to amuse  
 “ the Enemy.

“ Major General *Conway* wrote the Particulars of  
 “ the Plan, and gave it to Sir *Edward Hawke*, who  
 “ did not approve of it. The Reasons he gave for not  
 “ attempting to attack *Fouras* by Sea were peculiar  
 “ to his own Profession, and I am no Judge of them.  
 “ This I know, that had the Fort been attacked by  
 “ Ships, I should certainly have attempted to have  
 “ landed the Troops near that Fort.

“ The

“ The same Day about three or four o’Clock in  
 “ the Afternoon Admiral *Brodrick*, with three Cap-  
 “ tains of the Navy, who were sent out to sound  
 “ the Shore from *Rochelle* to Fort *Fouras*, came on  
 “ board the *Ramilies*, and made their Report ; the  
 “ Substance of which was, That there were only  
 “ two landing Places, one on each Side of *Chate-  
 “ laillon* ; that there was a hard sandy Beach, and  
 “ that behind the Beach there were Sand-Hills about  
 “ fifty Yards from the Top of high Water ; that  
 “ the Transports could not come nearer to either of  
 “ the aforesaid Bays, in order to land the Troops,  
 “ than a Mile and a half ; and that there was but  
 “ three Fathom Depth at high Water, near two  
 “ Miles from the Shore. From this Report it ap-  
 “ peared, That the Fleet could not approach the  
 “ Shore near enough to cover our landing, and  
 “ Troops and Artillery might easily be concealed  
 “ behind the Sand-Hills to oppose us ; and we had  
 “ the more Reason to expect an Opposition, as the  
 “ Rear Admiral had seen Troops marching on the  
 “ Shore : Add to this, that the Garrison of *Rochelle*  
 “ was within two Leagues, and might detach a con-  
 “ siderable Body of Men to attack us ; at the same  
 “ Time, the Ships were at too great a Distance to  
 “ secure our Retreat, or preserve a Communication  
 “ with us. *Thierri*, the Pilot of the *Magnanime*,  
 “ also affirmed, that he had been six or seven Weeks  
 “ on board in that Road, in all which Time it was  
 “ impossible from the Swell of the Sea to send a  
 “ Boat on Shore : This great Swell is owing to we-  
 “ sterly Winds setting into the Bay from the Ocean ;  
 “ which Winds were now daily expected, it being  
 “ near the Time of the Equinox.

“ And what great Attention ought to be paid to the Se-  
 “ curity of our Retreat, and the preserving a Communi-  
 “ cation with the Ships, will appear from a Paper given  
 “ me by Sir *John Ligonier*, now Lord Viscount *Ligonier*,  
 “ Commander in Chief of his Majesty’s Land Forces,  
 “ whose long Experience and great Abilities in the Art

“ of War, will surely vindicate any Officer, who is guided by so good an Authority: This Paper, containing his Observations on the intended Expedition, was, as I remember, read before the Council, and, when I desired a positive Order, he gave me that Paper.

“ The Paragraphs are as follow.”

‘ If an Attempt is to be made on *Rochefort*, it will be the Part of the Admiral to know the Coasts, to bring the Troops to the nearest Place, to cover the Landing by the Disposition of his Ships, and to destroy any Barbette Batteries, which the Enemy may have on the Shore, still remembering, that if the Troops are landed at too great a Distance from the Place, the Design will become dangerous, and probably impracticable.

‘ A safe and well secured Communication between the Camp and the Sea, from whence you are to receive your Supplies of all Kinds, is absolutely necessary --- the whole depends upon it; But this being done, I should not be much in Pain for the Safety of the Troops; an inferior Number dares not approach you, and one superior will not be easily assembled without your knowing it, and at all Events you have secured a Retreat to the Ships.’

“ Tho’ the Success of this Enterprize depended entirely upon the Suddenness of its Execution, yet it was apparent from many Circumstances, that we could not hope to find the Enemy unprepared. I had already received Intelligence from the Admiral, that Captain *Cleveland*, on the 17th of *August*, had spoke with a *Dutch* Convoy from *Rochelle*, and that the First Lieutenant of a Man of War came on board him, and told him, that the *French* expected the *English* at *Rochelle*.

“ Captain *Proby* also had reported to the Admiral, that he had, on the 11th of *September*, spoke with  
“ the

“ the Master of a *Dutch* Ship from *Yannes* to *Dort*,  
 “ who told him, that the *French* expected to be at-  
 “ tacked at *Rockelle*, or *St. Martin's*, by the *English*,  
 “ and that an Embargo was laid on all Shipping in  
 “ *France*.

“ After the Transports had been taken up, and the  
 “ Troops assembled near two Months, we sailed the  
 “ 8th of *September*; and the Alarm was given on the  
 “ 20th, in the Neighbourhood of *Rockefort*, by the  
 “ Arrival of our long expected Fleet; from the 20th  
 “ it must have been at least eight Days before we  
 “ could have come to *Rockefort*, and as there was In-  
 “ telligence from two Persons, that the Ditch round  
 “ the Town was capable of being filled with Water,  
 “ an Escalade could not be attempted with any Hopes  
 “ of Success; nor could it be supposed, but that, af-  
 “ ter so long Notice of an Enemy's Approach, the  
 “ Town would be put in a good Condition of De-  
 “ fence.

“ There was a Marshal of *France* either at *Rockelle*  
 “ or *Rockefort*, and by the Accounts of the Pri-  
 “ soners, there was an Army assembled; one said he  
 “ had seen seventeen Battalions in the Isle of *Rbé*,  
 “ and eleven at *Rockelle*. There are always Marines  
 “ there, the Place is very populous, and the Men used  
 “ to Arms; the Dock-men are very numerous, and  
 “ the Crews of the five Ships then in the River, a-  
 “ mounted, if compleat, to near three Thousand  
 “ Men.

“ As for the Opening mentioned by Colonel *Clerk*  
 “ and the Pilot, it is plain from its Situation on the  
 “ Banks of the River, that it was defended by the  
 “ Fire from the Ships, and the Enemy in two or three  
 “ Days Time might easily have raised an Entrench-  
 “ ment in that low marshy Soil, that would be a suffi-  
 “ cient Defence against a *Coup de Main*.

“ Admiral *Brodrick* said, that it was impossible to  
 “ land the 24th.

“ I now found myself in the Situation I had men-  
 “ tioned to Mr. *Pitt* in my Letter of the 11th of *Au-*  
 “ *gust*, having actually been several Days off the Coast  
 “ without being able to get into the Road, and the  
 “ Alarm was already given. I had acquainted Mr.  
 “ *Pitt*, that I looked upon this as a delicate Situation,  
 “ since the Success of the Enterprize depended on the  
 “ Suddenness of its Execution, and had desired par-  
 “ ticular Directions how to act. In his Answer, *Au-*  
 “ *gust* 13, he says, he has laid my Letter before his  
 “ Majesty, and that he is commanded by the King to  
 “ signify to me his Majesty’s Pleasure, that I do, in  
 “ Conformity to the Latitude given by his Majesty’s  
 “ Instructions, judge of the Practicability of the Ser-  
 “ vice upon the Spot, according as the contingent E-  
 “ vents and particular Circumstances may require,  
 “ the King judging it highly prejudicial to the Good  
 “ of his Service to give particular Orders and Direc-  
 “ tions with regard to possible contingent Cases, that  
 “ may arise.

“ From this Answer I thought it evident, that I  
 “ was impowered to act, as Events and Circumstances  
 “ required; and it appearing by the Circumstances  
 “ abovementioned, that we had been already seen for  
 “ many Days on the Coast, so that the Coast was  
 “ thoroughly alarmed; that by the small Quantity  
 “ of Artillery, we could not attack the Place in Form,  
 “ and by the Circumstances relating to it, there were  
 “ no Hopes of succeeding by an Escalade; and also  
 “ that there was no Security at all of a Retreat for  
 “ the Troops, or of any Communication with the  
 “ Ships; not chusing to depend upon my own Judg-  
 “ ment in so difficult and important an Affair, I  
 “ thought it my Duty, agreeable to his Majesty’s In-  
 “ structions, to desire a Council of War, to take into  
 “ Consideration the further Steps proper to be taken in  
 “ Execution of his Majesty’s secret Instructions.  
 “ The Council was desired by me; Sir *Edward Hawke*  
 “ summoned it, and presided at it; and I feel true  
 “ Content of Mind, that at that Council I concurr-  
 “ ed

“ ed in an unanimous Opinion with seven Land and  
 “ Sea Officers, whose Characters, whose Rank, Ex-  
 “ perience, and whose unstained Honour are so well  
 “ known to the World.

“ These were the Circumstances, under which I  
 “ called the Council of War. I did not in calling  
 “ it disobey my Instructions.

“ The Judgment was unanimous, and upon this  
 “ Judgment I must rest my Defence, and insist, that  
 “ it cannot be impeached, and, whilst it remains, I  
 “ cannot be found disobedient of Orders, which  
 “ named the Judges, and referred the Attempt to my  
 “ Determination with such Assistance.

“ Thus the Attempt upon *Rochefort* was deter-  
 “ mined upon the 25th of *September*, and the Judge  
 “ Advocate has produced nothing subsequent to that  
 “ Day, but what the *French* Engineer said to Colonel  
 “ *Clerk* upon the 26th, and the Observations of Colo-  
 “ nel *Wolfe* on the 29th.

“ I should not apprehend much was necessary to  
 “ satisfy the Court, that this Story, which Colonel  
 “ *Clerk* himself made so light of as not to mention  
 “ to me till the 27th at 9 in the Morning, although  
 “ it had been told him on the 26th in the Afternoon,  
 “ scarce deserves an Answer.

“ That Story surely was not sufficient to induce me  
 “ either to require a Review of, or act contrary to,  
 “ the unanimous Opinion of the Council of War.

“ I thought the Account not deserving so much  
 “ Attention; it was my honest Opinion, and if I  
 “ have erred, I have this Satisfaction, That I know,  
 “ I have not disobeyed.

“ But this appears from the Evidence of Colonel  
 “ *Clerk*, that I was seriously attentive to the Execution  
 “ of my Orders, and accordingly employed him on  
 “ the 24th, to reconnoitre and gain Intelligence.

“ Colonel *Clerk* says, that there was nothing in the  
 “ Ditch to let in, or keep in the Water; whereas it  
 “ appeared by Mr. *Bonneville's*, and the Pilot of the  
 “ *Neptune's* Information, that there were Sluices for  
 “ that

“ that Purpose. The scaling Ladders were in all 80,  
 “ 20 of which were of 25 Feet, and the rest of 30.

“ Colonel *Wolfe* has mentioned a Proposition of an  
 “ Attack, that I and General *Conway* made to Sir *Ed-*  
 “ *ward Hawke* upon the 24th; the Part which be-  
 “ longed to my Province in that Plan I embraced  
 “ cheerfully, and was ready to execute with Dispatch,  
 “ but my Part of it was but secondary; the Grounds  
 “ upon which the primary Part failed of Execution,  
 “ did not relate to my Share in the Operation, there-  
 “ fore I do not presume to make any Observations  
 “ upon it.

“ The Council of War of the 28th came to a Re-  
 “ solution to land with all possible Dispatch, to at-  
 “ tack the Forts leading to, and upon the Mouth of,  
 “ the River *Charante*; and it being judged most ex-  
 “ pedient, that the Descent should be made in the  
 “ Night, the necessary Orders were immediately given,  
 “ and about One o’Clock the Grenadiers, and great  
 “ Part of the Troops, who were to have landed with  
 “ me in the first Embarkation, were on board the  
 “ Boats, when a strong Wind blowing from the  
 “ Shore, the Officers of the Navy appointed to con-  
 “ duct the Landing, represented, that it was with  
 “ Difficulty the Long Boats, which were to be towed  
 “ on Shore, could make way, and consequently the  
 “ Troops would be a long Time exposed to the Fire  
 “ of the Enemy; That the Transport-Boats, which  
 “ were rowed by Soldiers, would be still slower, and  
 “ more exposed; that it would be Day, before the first  
 “ Embarkation could get on Shore, and that it would  
 “ be six Hours more before the Troops first landed  
 “ could be supported by a second Embarkation: The  
 “ Generals judging the landing under these Circum-  
 “ stances not to be expedient, agreed not to attempt  
 “ it that Night.

“ The next Morning Sir *Edward Hawke* acquaint-  
 “ General *Conway* and me, that if the General Offi-  
 “ cers had no farther military Operations to propose,  
 “ considerable enough to authorize his detaining the  
 “ Squa-

“ the Squadron under his Command longer there, he  
 “ intended to proceed with it for *England*, without Loss  
 “ of Time ; I made Answer, that I would summon the  
 “ General Officers to consider of it, and I desired him  
 “ to signify his Intentions in Writing, which he did  
 “ in a Letter to me the same Day ; I recollected that  
 “ it would be proper to summon a Council of War,  
 “ and applied to Sir *Edward* for one accordingly,  
 “ who declined it, and said, that Seamen were no  
 “ Judges of Land Operations, which were to be per-  
 “ formed by the Troops on Shore. In Consequence  
 “ of this Conversation, I summoned all the Land  
 “ Officers, who had been of the Council of War, and  
 “ laid Sir *Edward Hawke*’s Letter before them.

“ We considered the Uncertainty of landing, if  
 “ the Wind should blow as it had done the Night be-  
 “ fore, and the Account we had that Day received  
 “ from the Captain of the *Viper* Sloop, who had in-  
 “ formed Colonel *Howard*, that he had seen a consi-  
 “ derable Body of Troops near the Landing Place,  
 “ whose Numbers he did not exactly know, but he  
 “ had observed five Pair of Colours ; that he saw  
 “ them in Camp ; that the next Morning the View of  
 “ the Camp was interrupted, so that he could not see  
 “ them again, which he attributed to the Enemy  
 “ having thrown up some Ground on the Beach, and  
 “ that he saw the Sand Hills on the Beach consider-  
 “ ably higher than they were on *Sunday*, when he  
 “ came there. Colonel *Howard*, in his Return from  
 “ reconnoitring, reported this to me.

“ It farther appeared to us, that the Attempt up-  
 “ on those Forts at this Time, could not justify the  
 “ ill Consequences of detaining the Fleet in that Bay,  
 “ at a Time when, from what we had learnt from  
 “ the Conversation of the Sea Officers, two great  
 “ *French* Fleets were expected home ; that at this Sea-  
 “ son of the Year, so near the Equinox, such wester-  
 “ ly Winds were to be apprehended, as might detain  
 “ the Fleet there many Weeks ; that the Foundation,  
 “ upon which the Resolution of the Council of War  
 “ upon



“ upon the 28th was taken, was, that it might be  
 “ done during the necessary Detention of the Fleet in  
 “ the Demolition of the Fort of *Aix*, and thereupon  
 “ was directed to be done with all possible Dispatch :  
 “ That the Demolition of the Works of the Isle of  
 “ *Aix* was compleated that very Day, and that the  
 “ Wind was then fair for the Fleet to return ; add to  
 “ this, that the Time limited by his Majesty’s Instruc-  
 “ tions was now expired, and that the Time was not  
 “ prolonged by Mr. *Pitt*’s Letter, which allowed us  
 “ only to compleat such Operations, as we had already begun.

“ Upon all these Considerations, not thinking it a  
 “ Measure either adviseable or justifiable in us to take  
 “ upon ourselves the Consequences of detaining the  
 “ Fleet any longer in those Parts, we came unanimously into the Admiral’s Proposal of returning to  
 “ *England*.

“ This Meeting of all the Officers, who were properly under my Command, tho’ I do not call it a  
 “ Council of War, I look upon equal to one.

“ Sir *Edward Hawke*, the Commander of the Sea  
 “ Officers, declined calling them ; I was not certain,  
 “ that I had Power to do it. Sir *Edward Hawke*’s  
 “ Reason for declining to call the Council was, that  
 “ the Sea Officers could form no Judgment. Their  
 “ Presence therefore, at a Council of War, could only be Matter of Form ; the Land Officers could  
 “ only determine, and, tho’ summoned by me, did  
 “ determine.

“ I have now opened to the Court the Defence,  
 “ which I propose to make out in Evidence ; and I  
 “ cannot conclude without observing to this Court  
 “ the Singularity of my Case.

“ I stand before you a Commander in Chief, sent  
 “ out upon an uncertain contingent Attempt, with a  
 “ Power in my Instructions to judge upon the Circumstances, as they shall appear.

“ His Majesty, besides the Latitude given me, assigned me a Council of able and experienced Offi-

“ cers ;

“ cers; I acted by their Advice; and though I am  
 “ charged with Disobedience of Orders, in every Ar-  
 “ ticle of that supposed Disobedience, I have the  
 “ Sanction of the unanimous Judgment of those  
 “ whom the King appointed to assist mine.

“ I beg Pardon for having taken up so much Time.  
 “ I have endeavoured to avoid Prolixity, but if I  
 “ have erred in this respect, I hope the Situation I  
 “ stand in will be my Apology: The Patience and  
 “ Attention with which this Court has heard this  
 “ Trial, and the known Honour and Integrity of e-  
 “ very Member of it, leave me no Room to doubt,  
 “ that they will remember throughout, that I am ac-  
 “ cused of disobeying Orders, and that they will  
 “ make a just Conclusion from the Premises that  
 “ have been laid before them.”

The Rt. Hon. Major General HENRY SEYMOUR CONWAY being sworn as a Witness, at Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire, and questioned, Whether he recollects any Conversation between Mr. Secretary *Pitt* and him, about Port *L'Orient* and the Instructions?

*A.* He does recollect a Conversation with Mr. *Pitt*, which he believes was had on the 6th of *August*, the same Day Sir *John Mordaunt* set out for the Isle of *Wight*: Having heard that the Government had received some Intelligence relative to Port *L'Orient*, which shewed that Place not to be in such a Condition, as to admit of an Attack by the Force sent upon this Expedition, he, Major General *Conway*, had had some Discourse with Lord *Anson* on the Subject, and told his Lordship, he thought it was Pity, if Port *L'Orient* was in the State described, that it should remain, as he understood it did, an Article in Sir *John Mordaunt's* Instructions to attack it: His Lordship said, to the best of his Recollection, that he did not think Port *L'Orient* was seriously thought of at that Time, but, in regard to Sir *John Mordaunt's* Instructions, referred him to Mr. *Pitt*. The Deponent thereupon took the Liberty of mentioning to Mr. *Pitt*, what he had heard of the State of Port *L'Orient*,  
 who

who seemed to agree to it. He then observed, in like Manner as he had before done to Lord *Anson*, that it appeared to him rather hard upon Sir *John Mordaunt*, that the Order for attacking Port *L'Orient* should remain in his Instructions, if it was not seriously thought of: Mr. *Pitt's* Answer, to the best of his Recollection, was, that Port *L'Orient* was named amongst other Things, but that he did not apprehend, it was meant to confine Sir *John*; that he had a Latitude to act in regard to that, as he should judge proper.

Q. Whether at the Cabinet-Council Mention was made of laying a Ship to *Fouras*?

A. Is pretty positive, it was; *Tbierry* the French Pilot was examined in regard to it.

Q. Did he take Notice, whether Fort *d'Aiguille*, (which is near to *Fouras*) seemed to be a new Building or not?

A. The Work of it did appear very fresh to him.

Q. Did *Tbierry* the Pilot ever make Mention of that Fort in his Examination before the Council?

A. He can't recollect he did.

Q. Was that Fort near the Place, where *Tbierry* mentioned in the Council he thought there was a Probability of landing?

A. It was near the only Place he ever heard him mention, as a Landing-Place; it was near the Point of Land called the Point of *Fouras*.

Q. Does he remember coming to Sir *John Mordaunt* on board the *Ramilles*, and what Conversation passed?

A. He can't very particularly remember the Conversation that passed then; he had taken some View of that Coast himself, having been up at the Isle of *Aix*, and mentioned to Sir *John Mordaunt* his Ideas, how a Landing and Attack upon Fort *Fouras* and Fort *d'Aiguille* should be made; he wrote down a Plan for that Purpose, which he afterwards shewed, or read, to Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt*.

Q. Was not the Proposal, that if Sir *Edward*  
Hawke

*Hawke* would send a Ship to attack *Fouras*, they would endeavour to land the Troops at the same Time?

A. It was to that Effect: That was Part of it, that they should land the Forces as near *Fouras* as possible, and assault Fort *d' Aiguille*: there were other Particulars, that a Diversion should be made at the same Time on the Side of *Roebelle* and the Isle of *Rbé*.

Q. Did not Sir *Edward Hawke* decline that Proposal?

A. He made several Objections to it.

Q. Does not he recollect, that the attacking Fort *Fouras* was mentioned more than once?

A. Several Times.

Q. Did Sir *John Mordaunt* several Times desire from Lord *Ligonier* positive Orders before his leaving London?

A. He is very sure he did hear Sir *John* say, he wished, or hoped, upon so important a Case as this, that he might have a positive Order.

Q. Does he recollect Lord *Ligonier's* Answer?

A. Thinks he said, that positive Orders were never given in Cases of this Kind, or to that Effect.

Q. Does he remember a Paper of Observations of Lord *Ligonier's* upon this Occasion?

A. Yes.

Q. Does he remember that Paper to have been read at the Council, when they were all present?

A. To the best of his Recollection, Lord *Ligonier* did produce that Paper at Lord *Holderneffe's*, where the Cabinet-Council was held, and read it.

Q. What Day they first made Sight of Land?

A. On the 20th they made the Isle of *Oleron* about One.

Being desired to give an Account of what passed on board the *Ramilles* the 28th, the Night on which they intended to land;

He said, that Orders were given for landing that Night; he remembers, that being on board the *Ramilles* with Sir *John Mordaunt*, waiting for the Time  
to

to go to the Rendezvous, Captain *How* came on board, and said that he was sorry to tell them, there was a very strong Wind sprung up from the Shore, which would probably obstruct their Landing; Sir *John Mordaunt*, notwithstanding, resolved to go to the Rendezvous, which was on board the *America*: The Deponent accompanied him thither. As soon as they came on board, Adm. *Brodrick*, to the best of his Remembrance, was the Person who spoke; he can't be positive, whether the Admiral gave any Opinion of his own in regard to it, but he mentioned, that, the high Wind which was sprung up from the Shore, would make the Landing very tedious. Several of the Sea Captains represented, that the Wind was so strong, that the Boats which were towed up full of Men, could scarce make head against; that it would be Day-light before the first Embarkation of the Men could get on Shore; and that a second Embarkation would not be able to arrive there under six Hours more. He remembers, one of the Captains particularly shewed him one of the Long-boats, that was then towing up empty, which moved very slowly, and, as they said, could hardly proceed.

Q. Was it not his, Sir *John Mordaunt's* Intention, and were not his Orders given out accordingly, that the Landing should take Place just at the Break of Day?

A. No: He apprehended it was meant for a Night Landing, and the whole to be completed before Break of Day, if possible; and the Reason he apprehended to be, that the Ships of War could not lye up to assist the Landing, and that the Landing-place was so near the Town of *Rochelle*, that besides the Troops of the Country, the Garrison from that Place might have been ready to oppose the Landing of the Troops, if the Dispositions had been made for landing in the Day.

Q. At what Hour the Men were to be in the Boats?

A. He thinks about Eleven o'Clock.

Q. On the 24th, what was done after the Receipt of Admiral *Brodrick's* Report ?

A. It was proposed to go to the Isle of *Aix*, where they had a View of the Coast near *Fouras*, and where most of the *French* Prisoners were, in order to examine them.

Q. How did the Men of War and Transports lye at that Time ?

A. The Division under Admiral *Knowles*, which went up to attack *Aix*, laid up near the Isle of *Aix* ; Sir *Edward Hawke's* Division, and his Ship, the *Ramilies*, laid at the Distance of some Leagues ; three or four.

Q. Whether after being at the Isle of *Aix*, on the 24th in the Evening, they went on board the *Neptune* on purpose to examine more Prisoners ?

A. They did.

Q. How late it was before they parted ?

A. Thinks pretty late, cannot remember the Hour.

It being on the Stroke of Three, ADJOURN-  
ED till To-morrow Morning Ten o'Clock.

*Friday, 16th of December, 1757.*

THE COURT being met pursuant to Adjournment, Major General *Conway* was farther examined ;

Q. Whether he does not think that all proper Methods were taken for getting early Intelligence, as soon as the Isle of *Aix* was taken ?

A. He believes they were ; the Deponent himself was sent upon Command to the Isle of *Aix*, so that he was not at that Time with the Commanders in Chief, Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt* : The Deponent examined many Prisoners himself there, and reported to Sir *John Mordaunt*, when he waited upon him, what seemed most material in their Examination.

Q. If he remembers what any *French* Prisoners might say, in regard to there being a wet Ditch at *Rochefort* ?

E

A. He

*A.* He remembers one did say positively the Ditch could be flowed all round.

*Q.* Whether he recollects what any *French* Prisoners told him in regard to Troops in that Neighbourhood?

*A.* They gave various Accounts of the Number of Troops; most of the Officers and Soldiers said, there were a great many; as also that there was a Marshal of *France* in the Place, meaning *Rochefort*, Marshal *Senellette*; there was a Man who said he had seen eleven Battalions at *Rochelle*; the Prisoners in general made them a great many.

*Q.* Did any of the Prisoners mention their having been at Work at *Rochefort*?

*A.* There was one Man in particular, who, on the 24th, or 25th, in the Morning previous to the Council of War, said, they had been at Work there some Time.

*Q.* Can he recollect at any Time, when he was reconnoitring at the *Isle D'Aix*, whether he could distinguish from the Uniform, that there were *Swiss*, or other Troops, at *Fort Fouras*?

*A.* Either at *L'Isle D'Aix*, or on board Ship, he does recollect to have seen some upon the Coast near *Fouras* in red Cloathing, can't take upon him to say they were *Swiss*; he saw particularly an Officer, or two, riding upon the Coast; imagines, they came from some other Place or Command, out of Curiosity, down to the Shore. He saw a great many others in other Uniforms, particularly white and blue. The Numbers were different at different Times; some Hundreds certainly; at last, he saw as many as from 800 to 1000.

*Q.* Was not the Intelligence of the Pilots of the *Magnanime* and *Neptune*, and of Captain *Bonneville*, and of all the Witnesses, who were afterwards examined at the Council of War on the 25th (except that of Lieutenant Colonel *Clerk*) known to them before they met at the Council of War?

*A.* He imagines, they were most of them known; most of them, he believes, were examined by Sir *John Mor-*

*Morrdunt*, on board the *Neptune*, the Evening before.

Q. Were not several of the Members of the Council of War present on board the *Neptune* at that Time?

A. Yes, several were.

Q. Whether they had Artillery proper to attack *Rochefort* in Form?

A. He apprehends not, by what he has heard of the Artillery of the Place; he speaks of the Train of Artillery they had with them on the Expedition, not of the Ships.

Q. Whether proper Artillery to attack *Rochefort* in Form, was not mentioned and desired by the Generals at the Cabinet Council?

A. It was, as he remembers.

Q. Whether a Council of War was held on the 25th?

A. Yes.

Q. (*by the Court*) How far it appeared to him from the Pilot's Examination at the Cabinet Council, that the Possibility of attacking *Fouras* by Sea could be depended on?

A. He thinks the Pilot's Answer was doubtful; that he believed a Ship could lye up within half a Mile.

Q. What Objections Sir *Edward Hawke* made to the Proposals for an Attack, mentioned in the former Part of his Evidence?

A. He can't be quite positive, whether at that Time Sir *Edward* said a Ship could not lye up to *Fouras*; some Time after, it was laid aside, as an impracticable Thing: He objected particularly to the Ships being sent down to make a Feint towards *Rochelle* and the Isle of *Ré*, as imagining that Operation was not practicable, or not proper, he is not certain which. Sir *Edward* talked of bombarding *Rochelle*, as he remembers, but that was not the Sort of Diversion the Deponent proposed. The Report of the Rear Admiral and



Captains, which said there was no landing near *Fouras*, was not received at that Time.

Q. As he has only mentioned the Situation of Vice Admiral *Knowles's* and Sir *Edward Hawke's* Divisions, on the 24th in the Evening, how did Rear Admiral *Brodrick's* Division lay at that Time ?

A. The Deponent was in Vice Admiral *Knowles's* Division, and cannot say positively, but imagines Rear Admiral *Brodrick's* laid in the Rear, near Sir *Edward Hawke's*; perhaps a League distant.

Q. Were the Examinations of the Prisoners reduced to Writing ?

A. Some of them were, but those Minutes he has not now with him.

Q. What Accounts were given by the Prisoners, of the Ditch at *Rocheport*, in general ?

A. He does not remember, whether any denied the *Practicability* of the Ditch being made wet; they gave, in general, very confused Accounts of the Place.

Q. When it was that he saw the Troops mentioned in his Evidence, particularly the greatest Number, which he reputes to have been between 800 and 1000 ?

A. He saw Troops at all Times, some more, some less, but that greatest Number was seen at last, on the 29th.

Q. What Time he refers to, when he speaks, as having heard of the Artillery of the Place (meaning *Rocheport* ?)

A. Before the Expedition left *England*, all the Accounts of the Place agree in it; they have great Foundries of Cannon there, or in the Neighbourhood, which furnish Cannon to all the Ships that are fitted out there; he imagines, they could mount almost any Number of Cannon on the Ramparts and open Embrazures, as they pleased, as the Rampart was solid round the Place. The Deponent says, he heard Lieutenant Colonel *Clerk* say, the Artillery there was very considerable.

Q If

Q. If a Council of War was deemed necessary, Could it have been convened on the 24th, after receiving the Report of the Rear Admiral and Captains?

A. He believes it was possible, but it would have been very late, because the Gentlemen who were to compose it, laid in the different Divisions of the Fleet, and might not have been found on board their Ships at that Time.

THE FOLLOWING MINUTES of two several Councils of War, the one held on board the *Neptune* on the 25th of *September*, and the other on board the *Ramilies* on the 28th of *September* 1757, which were mentioned by Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, to be delivered to him by Sir *John Mordaunt*, were now read at Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire, (being first authenticated by Major-General *Conway*) viz.

‘ At a Council of War held on board his Majesty’s Ship *Neptune*, at Anchor off the Isle of *Aix*,  
‘ *September* 25, 1757.

‘ Present,

‘ Sir *Edward Hawke*, { Knight of the *Bath*, Admiral  
and Commander in Chief of  
his Majesty’s Ships employed  
on the present Expedition.

‘ Sir *John Mordaunt*, { Knight of the *Bath*, Lieute-  
nant General of his Majesty’s  
Forces, and General and Com-  
mander in Chief of the Troops  
on the present Expedition.

‘ *Charles Knowles*, Esq; Vice Admiral of the Red.

‘ The Rt. Hon. Major General *Henry Seymour Con-  
‘ way*.

‘ *Thomas Brodrick*, Esq; Rear Admiral of the White.

‘ Hon. Major General *Edward Cornwallis*.

‘ Captain *George Bridges Rodney*.

‘ Colonel *George Howard*.

' The Fortifications and Island of *Aix*, belonging  
 ' to the *French* King, having surrendered to his Ma-  
 ' jesty's Arms, the Council proceeded to take into  
 ' Consideration the farther Steps proper to be taken,  
 ' in Execution of his Majesty's secret Instructions to  
 ' Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt*, Com-  
 ' manders in Chief of his Majesty's Forces on the  
 ' present Expedition; and the first Object being to  
 ' determine, Whether a proper Place could be found  
 ' for landing the Troops, Sir *Edward Hawke* pro-  
 ' duced a Report by Rear Admiral *Brodrick*, and the  
 ' Captains *Douglas*, *Denis*, and *Buckle*, whom he  
 ' had sent to sound and reconnoitre the Coast from  
 ' *La Rochelle* to the Point of *Fouras*, near the Em-  
 ' bouchure of the River *Charente*, which Report is  
 ' hereunto annexed.

' The Council having taken the said Report into  
 ' Consideration, and examined the Pilots, it appears,  
 ' that there are but two landing Places; and that the  
 ' Troops could not be reimbarcked from either of  
 ' them in bad Weather, the Swell of the Sea making  
 ' so great a Surf on the Shore that no Boats could  
 ' be able to approach it to take the Troops off; the  
 ' ablest Pilot having informed the Council, that he  
 ' had been at Anchor seven Weeks in this Road, and  
 ' not a Boat been able to pass or repass: And it-like-  
 ' wise appears to the Council, that in case the Troops  
 ' should be overpowered by superior Numbers of the  
 ' Enemy, they could have no Protection from the  
 ' Cannon of the Fleet, the shoal Water preventing  
 ' their coming within Gun-shot.

' The Probability of Success in the Attempt against  
 ' *Rockefort*, in case the landing was effected, being  
 ' then taken into Consideration, Lieutenant Colonel  
 ' *Clerk*, Chief Engineer, was called in, and being  
 ' asked his Opinion, declared, That when he saw  
 ' the Place in the Year 1754, he thought no Place  
 ' was more capable of being taken by Assault; what  
 ' Alteration may have been made in the Place since,  
 ' he has not sufficient Information to judge; that he  
 ' does

' does not imagine any regular Attack was intended  
 ' against that or any other Place, the small Quan-  
 ' tity of Artillery we have not being sent upon that  
 ' Plan. Being asked, If the Ditch were flow'd with  
 ' Water, whether he should then think it practicable  
 ' to take the Place by Escalade; said, he thought not;  
 ' but that when he saw the Ditch, it did not appear  
 ' to him capable of being flow'd.

' Monsieur de Bonneville, Volunteer, being asked  
 ' what he knew of *Rocheport*, said, that he was there  
 ' about nine Years ago; that the Ramparts were of  
 ' Earth, and that there are Sluices there, by which  
 ' they can flow the Ditch, and that it was full of  
 ' Water all round, when he was there.

' The Pilot of the *Neptune* being called in, said,  
 ' That he had been very frequently at *Rocheport*; that  
 ' he commanded a small Vessel there many Years;  
 ' that they have Sluices near the Hospital, by which  
 ' they can fill the Ditch with Water; that they raise  
 ' them sometimes to cleanse the Ditch, and that he  
 ' has seen Water in it quite round the Town.

' The Informations of some *French* Prisoners were  
 ' then produced confirming the same, as also that  
 ' they had been working on the Fortifications there  
 ' for some Time past.

' The Intelligence received from several neutral  
 ' Vessels spoke with on the Passage was also produced,  
 ' declaring, That the *French* had been for some Time  
 ' in Expectation of a Descent from the *English* in  
 ' those Parts; all which being taken into Considera-  
 ' tion, together with the long Detention of the Troops  
 ' in the Isle of *Wight*, and our meeting with con-  
 ' trary Winds, Fogs and Calms upon our Passage,  
 ' the several Informations received of Troops assem-  
 ' bled in the Neighbourhood, and the great Improb-  
 ' ability of finding the Place unprovided, or of sur-  
 ' prising it, or consequently succeeding in an Enter-  
 ' prize founded on the Plan of an Assault or Esca-  
 ' lade merely; and the Uncertainty of a secure Ré-

‘ treat for the Troops, if landed ; the Council are  
 ‘ unanimously of Opinion, that such an Attempt is  
 ‘ neither adviseable, nor practicable.

‘ *Edw<sup>d</sup>. Hawke,*  
 ‘ *J. Mordaunt,*  
 ‘ *Cha<sup>s</sup>. Knowles,*  
 ‘ *H. Seymour Conway,*  
 ‘ *Tho<sup>s</sup>. Brodrick,*  
 ‘ *Edw<sup>d</sup>. Cornwallis,*  
 ‘ *G. B. Rodney,*  
 ‘ *G. Howard.*’

‘ At a Council of War held on board his Majes-  
 ‘ ty’s Ship *Ramilies* in *Basque Road*, this 28th of Sep-  
 ‘ tember 1757.

‘ Present,

‘ *Sir Edward Hawke,* { Knight of the *Bath*, Admiral  
 and Commander in Chief of  
 his Majesty’s Ships employed  
 on the present Expedition.

‘ *Sir John Mordaunt,* { Knight of the *Bath*, Lieute-  
 nant General of his Majesty’s  
 Forces, and Commander in  
 Chief of the Troops employed  
 on the present Expedition.

‘ *Charles Knowles*, Esq; Vice Admiral of the Red.  
 ‘ The Rt. Hon. Major General *Henry Seymour Conway*.  
 ‘ *Thomas Brodrick*, Esq; Rear Admiral of the White.  
 ‘ Hon. Major General *Edward Cornwallis*.  
 ‘ Captain *George Bridges Rodney*.  
 ‘ Colonel *George Howard*.

‘ The Council of War being assembled, at the De-  
 ‘ fire of *Sir John Mordaunt*, proceeded to take un-  
 ‘ der Consideration, Whether it is adviseable to land  
 ‘ the Troops to attack the Forts leading to, and up-  
 ‘ on the Mouth of the River *Charante*; and after  
 ‘ mature Deliberation are unanimously of Opinion,  
 ‘ That

\* That it is adviseable to land the Troops for that  
\* Purpose with all possible Dispatch.

\* *Edw<sup>d</sup>. Hawke,*  
\* *J. Mordaunt,*  
\* *Chas. Knowles,*  
\* *H. Seymour Conway,*  
\* *Tho<sup>t</sup>. Brodrick,*  
\* *Edw<sup>d</sup>. Cornwallis,*  
\* *Geo. Bridges Rodney,*  
\* *G. Howard.*

A PAPER was then tendered by Sir *John Mordaunt* to the Court, as containing Observations of Sir *John* (now Lord) *Ligonier*, mentioned by Major General *Conway* to have been read at a Meeting of the Cabinet Council; and it being admitted by the Judge-Advocate, that the said Observations, or Hints, were written by Sir *John Ligonier*;—(but prior to his having any Knowledge of the Disposition of the *French* Troops afterwards produced at the Cabinet Council)—and that a Copy thereof had been given to Sir *John Mordaunt* at his own Desire; the said Paper was read as follows:

“ THERE is a Chance in the best concerted Military  
“ Enterprizes, which every Man of long Service  
“ must have experienced; what Share then must be  
“ left to Fortune in an Expedition, where neither the  
“ Country, nor the Number of Troops, you are to  
“ act against, is known with any Precision,

“ The Capacity of the Generals may supply this  
“ Want of Intelligence, but to give them any positive Plan or Rule of Action under such Circumstances, I apprehend would be absurd.

“ If I am rightly informed, the great Point his  
“ Majesty has in View by this Expedition, and the  
“ alarming the Coasts of *France*, is the Hopes of  
“ making a powerful Diversion in Favour of H.R.H.  
“ the Duke, as well as the King of *Prussia*, who desires and presses much this very Measure.

“ In

“ In the Execution of this General Plan, a Project of giving a mortal Blow to the naval Power of *France* is in his Majesty’s Thoughts, by attacking and destroying, if possible, the Dock, Shipping, and naval Stores at *Rochefort*.

“ A Plan of that Place given by one of his Majesty’s Engineers, who was there in 1754, seems to encourage the Attempt; and it must be owned, that without such Authority it could hardly be believed, that a Place of that great Importance could be left in so defenceless a Condition.

“ In all doubtful dangerous Military Attempts the Advantages, that may accrue from Success, ought to be weighed against the Damage and Misfortunes, that may be the Consequences of a Repulse, and that well considered may in Prudence determine the Choice.

“ If an Attempt is to be made upon *Rochefort*, it will be the Part of the Admiral to know the Coasts, to bring the Troops to the nearest Place, to cover their landing by the Disposition of his Ships, and to destroy any Barbet Batteries, which the Enemy may have upon the Shore, still remembering, that if the Troops are landed at too great a Distance from the Place, the Design will become dangerous, and probably impracticable.

“ Supposing the Troops landed, it must be left to the Consideration of the Generals, Whether they should not march with the proper Precautions, directly to *Rochefort*, to prevent any Succours being thrown into the Place, at the same Time, that the Marines should be employed in making a good Entrenchment for the Security of the Stores to be landed from Time to Time, as well as of a Retreat in Case of Necessity.

“ We are told, the Country in the Neighbourhood is low and marshy; that Circumstance might be of great Advantage in this Undertaking, because in that Case Troops cannot march by *Overtures dans*  
“ *la*

“ *la Campagne*, but must follow the Dykes, or Caw-  
 “ feys, which may be easily defended by Coupures, or  
 “ Redoubts.

“ A safe and well secured Communication between  
 “ the Camp and the Sea, from whence you are to re-  
 “ ceive your Supplies of all Kinds, is absolutely ne-  
 “ cessary, the whole depends upon it :---But this be-  
 “ ing done, I should not be much in Pain for the  
 “ Safety of the Troops, an inferior Number dares  
 “ not approach you, and one superior will not be  
 “ easily assembled without your knowing it ; and, at  
 “ all Events, you have secured a Retreat to the Ships.

“ I would advise to procure Guides upon the Spot,  
 “ and paying them greatly when faithful ; there are  
 “ Numbers of Protestants in that Province, that wish  
 “ you well, and would be glad to go on Board with you.

“ As for a *Coup de Main*, it may, perhaps, succeed  
 “ best at your coming up, as the Enemy may be in  
 “ great Hurry, Surprise, and Consternation at such  
 “ an unexpected Visit, and not have had Time to  
 “ make his Dispositions ; but if that is not thought  
 “ proper, it may succeed as well after the Place has  
 “ been thoroughly reconnoitred, and you have fixed  
 “ the Spots where you design to direct your greatest  
 “ Efforts, and if the Enemy see any Preparations  
 “ for a regular Attack, they will less suspect a *Coup*  
 “ *de Main*.

“ *Bergen-op-Zoom* was taken by a *Coup de Main*,  
 “ after a long Siege.

“ *St. Philip's* was taken by scaling Ladders and  
 “ a *Coup de Main*, though the Garrison was 3000  
 “ strong, after a Siege of 56 Days.

“ The Necessity of dividing a small Garrison in  
 “ a Place of such Circumference, as *Rochefort*, may fa-  
 “ cilitate the Success of a bold Attempt.”

The Hon. Lt. Col. JAMES MURRAY being sworn,  
 was asked, what he saw in the Isle of *Rbé* ?

A. The Morning of the 23d, the Day of the At-  
 tack on the Isle of *Aix*, he went on Board the *Rami-*  
*lies,*



*lies*, and from the Poop of that Ship with Col. *Hodgson*, and Col. *Wolfe*, took a View of the Isle of *Rbé*; they saw a Body of Men with two Colours, he thinks, equal to a Battalion of 600 or 700 Men, marching along Shere to Fort *Sablanceau*; they saw them lodge their Colouts just by the Side of the Fort, and immediately fall to work upon the Fort on the Outside of it: They viewed this with Telescopes. They saw likewise Vessels passing from the Isle of *Rbé* to the Continent, or the Continent to the Isle of *Rbé*, is not certain which; the Vessels seemed to be about sixty or seventy Tons, as near as he could judge.

Q. Did he view the Coast towards *Fouras*, when the Transports laid at the Isle of *Aix*?

A. Yes, he did with a Telescope.

Q. What did he observe?

A. The Morning of the 25th from his Transport, which laid off the Isle of *Aix*, he took a View of the Coast of the Peninsula, upon which *Fouras* is situated, from the Point next to the Isle d' *Enet*, which is the northernmost Point of that Peninsula, as far South, as his Eye could reach; it appeared to him, that there was a very fair Bay for Landing very near that North Point; but that there was a Stone Battery there, or Redoubt, (does not know which it was) which defended that Bay; he distinguished seven or eight Embrazures with Guns; likewise Guns *en Barbette*, is not positive, as to the Number. Between this Battery, or Redoubt, and *Fouras*, there was an Encampment; the Deponent could count thirty Tents; the full View of the Camp was intercepted by a Wood; he saw about 4 or 500 Men at Work upon the said Battery, and in the Bay between that and *Fouras*, whom he imagined to belong to that Encampment. He also saw Men at Work upon *Fouras*; and upon a rising Ground above *Fouras*, he saw 11 or 12 Guns naked (no Parapet.) The Shore to the Southward of *Fouras* was rocky, and did not seem to afford any proper Place for a Debarkation: The Distance between the said  
stone

Stone Redoubt, or Battery, did not seem to exceed a Mile and a Half. Upon the Isle *Madame* he saw People at Work, also two Officers Tents upon a rising Ground, just above the Sea; he was at too great a Distance to give a distinct Account of the Isle *Madame*; this was all he could see there.

Q. Whether he was near enough to distinguish from the Walls, whether Fort *d'Aiguille* was built lately or not?

A. It was Masonry and appeared new; it was either new, or newly cleaned up.

Sir *John Mordaunt* observing, that Lieut. Colonel *Murray*, if he recollects right, was wounded at *Ostend*, during the Siege, and left at *Ghent*, desired he would inform the Court, whether there were not *French* Militia employed at the Siege of *Ostend*, and likewise in Garrison at *Ghent*; and, from what he saw of the *French* Militia, What is his Opinion of them?

Lieut. Col. *Murray* answered, he can't take upon him to say, there were any *French* Militia employed at the Siege of *Ostend*, as he was confined; but he heard there were three Battalions, as well as he can recollect. At *Ghent*, where Sir *John Mordaunt* left him behind, he saw several Regiments; the Regiment of *Normandy* was at the same Time in the Garrison there; these Militia in their Cloaths and Appearance were like the other Troops, but he had no Opportunity of knowing any Thing of their Quality. The Militia, if they were such, which opposed our Troops, when they made the Descent in *Britany*, were a despicable Rabble, and made no Resistance; they seemed to him to be the *Posse Comitatus*, and he believes them to be different from the Militia; they were neither regularly clothed, nor armed.

Q. (by the Court.) At what Time he reported, or communicated to Sir *John Mordaunt*, what he had seen from the *Ramilies* in the Isle of *Rbé*?

A. He don't recollect that he mentioned it to Sir *John Mordaunt* at all; Colonel *Hudgson*, and Colonel

nel *Wolfe* being both there, he took it for granted they would.

Q. At what Time he reported, or communicacced to Sir *John Mordaunt*, what he saw from his Transport off the Isle of *Aix*, on the Morning of the 25th ?

A. He made no regular Report ; believes, he mentioned it one Day in the Admiral's Cabin, when every Body was giving an Account of what they had seen ; but is not certain of that neither.

Capt. PATRICK TONYN, Aid de Camp to Sir *John Mordaunt*, being sworn, and desired to give an Account of what Conversation passed on board the *Raz-milies* on the Evening of the 23d, about the attacking of Fort *Fouras* ; deposed, that in the Evening after the Isle of *Aix* was taken, he said to Sir *Edward Hawke*, that the next Step that appeared necessary to be taken, was, to attack *Fouras* by some of the Ships, to bombard *Rochelle*, or give any other Diversion, or Jealousy to the Enemy, and that the Troops, in that Case, might be landed at *Chatelailon*, or any other Spot, that might be found out thereabouts. The Admiral said, a little Time, after what the Deponent has now repeated was spoke to him, that he would lay a Ship along-side of *Fouras*, bombard *Rochelle*, and the Troops might land ; he recollects, that Col. *Wolfe* immediately took up the Conversation, and the Discourse continued between him and the Admiral.

Capt. THOMAS OSBERT MORDAUNT, Aid de Camp to Sir *John Mordaunt*, being sworn, and asked, Whether he was present at any Conversation with Sir *Edward Hawke*, on the Evening of the 23d ?

Deposed, that he remembers being present at a Discourse that Evening, but can't now take upon him to deliver what passed ; but on the Morning of the 24th, he received a Message from Sir *Edward Hawke*, desiring him to come down to him in the Cabbins, where he found the Admiral, the Vice-Admiral, and the Pilot of the  
Mag-

*Magnanime* : Sir *Edward Hawke* desired the Deponent, as he did not understand *French* himself, to ask the Pilot some Questions, and explain his Answers to them. — Among other Questions, he asked particularly about the Approach of Ships of War to Fort *Foures* ; the Pilot said, he would undertake to carry the *Magnanime* within half a Mile, even within a Quarter of a Mile of the Fort, but then he must run her upon the soft Mud, from whence the next Tide would bring her off. Sir *Edward* asked the Pilot, if by lightning the *Barfleur* he could bring her as near ; he answered, he could, but had rather go with the *Magnanime* : The Admiral seemed satisfied with this Discourse, saying, that would do, or to that Effect.

Q. Does he recollect, whether the Pilot spoke of a *French* Mile, or an *English* Mile ?

A. The Deponent asked him particularly, What Miles he meant ; and the Pilot answered, “ Miles of *England*.”

Vice Admiral CHARLES KNOWLES being sworn, and desired to inform the Court, what *Thierry* the Pilot told him of the Swell of the Sea in the Road of *Basque* ; said, he has declared that in the Council of War held on the 25th of *September*.

Q. Does he recollect, when he first mentioned it ?

A. He can't recollect ; it must have been before the Council of War, or else he could not have mentioned it there. The Passage he refers to in the Minutes of the Council of War is this—“ The ablest  
“ Pilot having informed the Council, that he had  
“ been at Anchor seven Weeks in this Road, and  
“ not a Boat been able to pass or repass.”

The following List of Ships sent out under the Command of Sir *Edward Hawke* on the Expedition being, by Desire of a Member of the Court, shewn to Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, he informed the Court, that all the Ships contained in the said List, except the *Southampton*, were in the *Basque Road*, which Ship, having taken a Frigate, the Admiral sent her into Port, viz.

| Rate       | Guns | Men | Ships           | Commanders         |
|------------|------|-----|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1          | 100  | 870 | Royal George    | Matthew Buckle     |
| 2          | 90   | 780 | Ramilies        | James Hobbs        |
|            |      | 770 | Neptune         | James Galbraith    |
|            |      | 750 | Namur           | Peter Denis        |
|            | 84   | 770 | Royal William   | Witt. Taylor       |
|            | 80   | 700 | Barfleur        | Samuel Graves      |
| 3d         | 80   | 666 | Princess Amelia | Stephen Colby      |
|            | 74   | 700 | Magnanime       | Hon. Richard Howe  |
|            |      | 700 | Torbay          | Hon. Aug. Keppel   |
|            |      | 600 | Dublin          | Geo. B. Rodney     |
|            | 70   | 520 | Burford         | James Young        |
|            | 64   | 500 | Alcide          | James Douglas      |
| 4th        | 60   | 420 | America         | Hon. John Byron    |
|            |      | 420 | Achilles        | Hon. S. Barrington |
|            |      | 420 | Medway          | Charles Proby      |
|            |      | 420 | Dunkirk         | Robert Digby       |
| 5th        | 32   | 220 | Southampton     | J. Gilchrist       |
| 6th        | 28   | 200 | Coventry        | Carr Scrope        |
| Frigate    | 18   | 120 | Cormorant       | Benjamin Clive     |
|            |      | 120 | Postillion      | William Cooper     |
|            |      | 120 | Beaver          | Edward Gascoigne   |
|            | 16   | 80  | Pelican         | James O'Hara       |
|            | 14   | 80  | Escort          | Charles Inglis     |
| Bomb       | 8    | 60  | Firedrake       | Owen Edwards       |
|            |      | 60  | Infernal        | James M'Kenzie     |
| Fireship   |      | 45  | Pluto           | John Lindsey       |
|            |      | 45  | Proserpine      | Francis Banks      |
| Bufs       | 6    | 45  | Canterbury      | Thomas Lempriere   |
|            |      | 45  | Medway          | Charles Lucas      |
| Hesp. Ship | 22   | 100 | Thetis          | John Moutray       |
|            |      |     | Hunter Cutter.  |                    |

Vice Admiral *Knowles* being asked (by the Court) how many Men, as he thinks, could have been landed in one Embarkation?

A. He

A. He was on another Service intirely distant from that of the Embarkation, and cannot answer that Question.

Q. What occasioned the Fleet not coming into the Road sooner than the 23d, seeing they made the Coast on the 20th?

A. He will give the best Account he can, without his Log-Book and Journal; but for want of them cannot be particular as to the Hours.—In the Morning of the 20th, Sir *Edward Hawke* gave him the following Order, *viz.*

‘ By Sir *Edward Hawke*, Knight of the *Bath*,  
 ‘ Admiral of the *Blue* Squadron of his  
 ‘ Majesty’s Fleet, &c.

‘ If in standing in between the Isles of *Rbé* and  
 ‘ *Oleron*, I shall find the Winds and Weather will  
 ‘ admit of proceeding to *Basque* Road, and attacking  
 ‘ the Isle of *Aix*, I will hoist a red Flag on the Flag-  
 ‘ staff at the Foretop-gallantmast-head, and fire  
 ‘ three Guns; then you are hereby required and di-  
 ‘ rected, without Loss of Time, to stand in as near  
 ‘ to the said Isle of *Aix*, as the Pilots will carry you,  
 ‘ with all, or as many of the Ships of your Divi-  
 ‘ sion, as you shall think sufficient for that Service,  
 ‘ and batter it, till such Time, as the Garrison shall  
 ‘ either surrender, or abandon it. In either Case  
 ‘ you are to land a Number of Men sufficient to de-  
 ‘ molish it with all possible Dispatch, sending me the  
 ‘ earliest Intelligence of your Proceedings. For  
 ‘ which this shall be your Order.

‘ Given under my Hand on Board his Majesty’s  
 ‘ Ship *Ramilies* at Sea this 20th Sept. 1757.

E D. H A W K E.

‘ To *Charles Knowles*, Esq; Vice-  
 ‘ Admiral of the *Red* Squadron  
 ‘ of his Majesty’s Fleet.

‘ By Command of the Admiral, ‘ *J. Hay.*’

F

The

The Signal being given, the Deponent about Noon, took his Leave of Sir *Edward Hawke*, and made Sail with his Division. The *Medway*, which was a-head by Sir *Edward's* Order, to look out for the Land, about two or three o'Clock, as near as he can remember, made a Signal for seeing the Land; very soon after, the Deponent saw it himself: As his own Ship and those of his Division were ordered to prepare for the Attack, the Lieutenant, or the Captain, came to acquaint him, the Ship, was clear and ready for Action; this was about Four o'Clock, the Wind at that Time, and to the best of his Remembrance the whole Day, was about N. E. As he looked upon a Ship cleared, and in Order for Battle, to be a very entertaining Sight, he desired Major General *Conway* to go down to see his Ship between Decks: While they were viewing her, one of his Lieutenants came down, sent by the Captain, to acquaint him, Capt. *Keppel* hailed the Ship, and told them, there was a *French* Man of War standing in for the Fleet; for some short Space of Time the Deponent took no Notice of it, thinking it impossible, the Fleet should not see her; a second Message was sent him down to the same Purpose, he then immediately went upon Deck with General *Conway*, and was shewn her by his Captain, when with their Glasses they plainly discovered her to be a two-deck'd Ship; she soon made a private Signal by hoisting a Jack at her Mizen-topmast-head; the Deponent was in Doubt, whether to make a Signal to any of his Division to chase, being ordered on a different Service, which he took Notice of to Major General *Conway*, and to his Captain; he judges, he was then at least five Miles a-head of Sir *Edward Hawke*, and the Enemy's Ship much nearer to him and his Division, than they were to Sir *Edward Hawke* and the rest of the Fleet; and he plainly saw, if some of his Division did not chase her, none of the others could possibly see her, so as to chase her, when Night came on. The *Magnanime* was then about two Miles to  
Leward

Leward of them, on which he threw out her Signal to chace, and hailed Capt. *Keppel* in the *Torbay*, and directed him to chace also; observing, at the same Time, to Major General *Conway* and his Captain, that if Sir *Edward Hawke* did not approve of what he had done, he would certainly call them in again; but, instead of that, Sir *Edward* threw out their Signals to chace, by way of confirming what he had done; and in Addition, made the Royal *William's* Signal also, belonging to his Division; two more Signals for Ships in the rest of the Fleet were thrown out afterwards, and very soon recalled. Early the next Day in the Morning, Sir *Edward Hawke* sent the Deponent the following Order to take under his Command three other Ships in the Room of those three Ships that were detached to chace, viz.

‘ By Sir *Edward Hawke*, Knight of the  
 ‘ Bath, Admiral of the Blue Squa-  
 ‘ dron of his Majesty’s Fleet.

‘ You are hereby required and directed  
 ‘ *Dublin*, ‘ to take under your Command the Ships  
 ‘ *Burford*, ‘ named in the Margin; the Captains of  
 ‘ *Achilles*. ‘ which have my Orders to follow your  
 ‘ Directions; and proceed, without a Mo-  
 ‘ ment’s Loss of Time, to put in Exe-  
 ‘ cution the Orders you received from me  
 ‘ Yesterday. For which this shall be your  
 ‘ Order.

‘ To  
 ‘ *Charles Knowles*, Esq; Vice-  
 ‘ Admiral of the Red Squadron  
 ‘ of his Majesty’s Fleet.

‘ Given under my  
 ‘ Hand on Board his  
 ‘ Majesty’s Ship *Ra-*  
 ‘ *milies*, at Sea, this  
 ‘ 21st Sept. 1757.

‘ By Command of the  
 ‘ Admiral.

‘ ED. HAWKE.’

‘ J. HAY.’



In Obedience to that Order, the Deponent proceeded with his Division with all the Sail they could carry, to get in, and make, what Land it was; he judges it was about 9 o'Clock, when they were got within about two Miles of the Land, in 11 Fathoms Water, very hazy thick Weather, so as his Pilot desired, the Ship might be tacked and laid with the Head off till it cleared, so as he could see his Marks. Whilst he was laying to, he made a Signal for the Captains of his Division, and ordered them to send for their Pilots, no two of whom agreed, what Land it was; their several Examinations he took down, and immediately sent them to Sir *Edward Hawke*, who by that Time was advanced nearer to him by two or three Miles than he was before, as he the Deponent laid with his Head off Shore. In his Letter to Sir *Edward* he acquainted him, that not one of the Pilots would even take Charge to lead in with a twenty Gun Ship; if they would, his Division should have followed her. Soon after his Boat went away, he made a Signal for speaking with the Admiral, seeing he continued under Sail, and did not stop to take up his Boat. At the same time he made sail with his Division towards him, and by about 12 joined him; when the Deponent got on board him, he was surprized to see Mr. *Keppel* on Board, and also to find the *Magnanime* and *Royal William* had joined him again, which the thick weather had prevented the Deponent's knowing. Sir *Edward Hawke*, upon the Deponent's acquainting him with what had happened, (for he thinks he got on board, before his Letter) immediately sent for the Pilot of the *Magnanime*, at the same time telling the Deponent, he judged, what was the Matter when he saw him bring to, for his Pilot had refused carrying his Ship in: When the Pilot of the *Magnanime* came on board, he immediately told them, what Land it was; and after offering to carry the Fleet in, returned on board his own Ship, and led the Deponent's Division in, the Admiral and the rest of the Fleet following.

The

The Wind was pretty fresh all this Day, till towards the Evening, when about 6 o'Clock the Tide of Flood being spent, the *Magnanime* made the Signal to anchor; they were then in the Mouth of the *Pertuis* of *Antioche*: About 8 o'Clock Sir *Edward Hawke* made the Signal for the Fleet to anchor, and they continued working in, and anchored, as they came into proper Births, all Night. —Early in the Morning of the 22d the *Magnanime* made the Signal, when the Deponent weighed with his Division, and Sir *Edward Hawke* and the rest of the Fleet weighed also: About 11 o'Clock it falling calm, the Signal was again made to anchor; about Two or Three a small Breeze springing up westerly, the *Magnanime* made the Signal and weighed again, and the Deponent ran in with his Division, till between 9 and 10 o'Clock at Night, Sir *Edward Hawke* and the Fleet of Transports all following, when the Deponent's Division came to an Anchor.

Q. When was the Demolition of the Isle of *Aix* finished?

A. About 7 o'Clock in the Evening of the Day before that, on which they sailed for *England*.

Q. Whether a Council of War, if thought necessary, could have been held on the Evening of the 24th, after receiving the Report of the Rear Admiral and Captains?

A. As to the Possibility of it, or not, he can't answer, the Council of War wanting the Testimony of several Evidences, of whom he cannot say, where they were, or when they could have been collected together; besides, Admiral *Brodrick* was just returned from Sounding, and had been up all the Night before, and Colonel *Howard*, one of the Members of the Council, who was in the Fort at the Isle of *Aix*, must have been sent for, which would have taken up 3 or 4 Hours, it being 9 or 10 Miles distant.

Q. (At Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire.) Whether that Evening was not employed on board his, the Vice-Admiral's

Admiral's Ship, in getting proper Intelligence concerning *Rockefort*?

A. On the 24th in the Morning, the Day after the Attack of the Isle of *Aix*, the Deponent saw his Signal out on board Sir *Edward Hawke*; on which Major General *Conway* and he went away immediately; Sir *Edward Hawke*, on their coming on board, told the Deponent, Admiral *Brodrick* and three Captains were gone reconnoitring for a Landing-Place, and he wished for their speedy Return. As that Signal, which was out on board Sir *Edward*, was for the Rear-Admiral as well as the Deponent, being a Standard at the Ensign-Staff, and the Vessels, which Admiral *Brodrick* had with him, were not in Sight, he begged of Sir *Edward* to make the Signal for all Land and Sea General Officers, which is the Standard at the Mizzen Top-mast Head, that being most discernible at a Distance, and to repeat firing a Gun every Hour, which he did: Before Four, Admiral *Brodrick* and the Captains returned, very much fatigued, and drew up their Report. After taking a Morfel of Dinner they all got into their Boats and went away to the Isle of *Aix* (excepting Admiral *Brodrick*) in order to collect what Intelligence they could from the Prisoners taken in the Fort; a Number of the Prisoners were sent on board the Deponent's Ship, and examined, one by one, by General *Conway*, he speaking *French*, till near 11 o' Clock at Night, when Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt* went away; and the Admiral declared his Intention of holding a Council of War on board the Deponent's Ship the next Morning, which was accordingly done.

Q. Whether the Pilot of the *Neptune* was examined that Night?

A. He cannot remember.

Q. Does he recollect any thing relating to a Report, Captain *Proby* made to the Admiral, of his having spoke to a *Dutch* Master, in relation to the *French* having made great Preparations at *Rockelle* and *St. Martins*?

A. He

A. He conceives, that is contained in the Minutes of the Council of War of the 25th, among the Reasons assigned for the Opinion of that Council; but in regard to what passed at that Council, he informed the Court, that he took very exact Minutes, which he has now with him, and he laid the same before the Court, in Words following; *viz.*

‘ Sir *Edward Hawke*’s Instructions read, dated 5th *August*, 1757, as far as is found practicable (*Quere*, Intelligence if to be considered, or believed before Trial.)

‘ Sir *John Mordaunt*’s Instructions read — conformable to the other — dated 3d *August*.

‘ Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* to Mr. Secretary *Pitt*, dated 11 *August*, 10 o’Clock at Night, 1st *Wight*, — regarding contrary Winds preventing the sudden Execution of his Majesty’s Instructions.

‘ Mr. Secretary *Pitt*’s Answer read, dated 13th *August*, — clear, as to Power of judging.

‘ Mr. Secretary *Pitt*’s Letter to Sir *Edward Hawke*, dated 15th *September*, — urging the Attempt for the Destruction of *Rocheport*, and clear as to Limitation of time.

‘ D<sup>o</sup> to Sir *John Mordaunt* — D. D.

‘ Report — Admiral *Brodrick*.

‘ On Examination of Col. *Clerk*, all that could be gathered is, that the Army are to march up to see, if *Rocheport* can be escaladed or not, but that all opening of Trenches for carrying on of a regular Siege were not in his Plan for attacking it.

‘ *Bonville* — a Ditch.

‘ Pilot *Neptune* — a Ditch and Sluices.

‘ Prisoners — *Ditto* — & *Contra*, and worked on Fortifications about a Fortnight.

‘ 12 Broke up, — unfinished.

It being Three o'Clock,  
ADJOURNED till to Morrow at Ten in the  
Morning.

SATURDAY 17th DECEMBER, 1757.

THE COURT being met, and Vice Admiral  
*Knowles* not being yet come,

THE FOLLOWING Letters of the 18th and 19th  
*August* last, from Captain *Archibald Cleveland* to *John*  
*Cleveland*, Esq; Secretary to the Lords Commissioners  
of the Admiralty, and proved by him to have been  
received on the 19th of the same Month, were read  
by Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*, viz.

" *Gibraltar, Spithead, August 19th, 1757-*

" Sir,

" Be pleased to inform the Lords Commissioners  
" of the Admiralty of the Inclosed ; I should have  
" sent it Yesterday, but thro' Hurry I had mislaid it.

" I am,

" Sir,

" Your most Humble Servant,

" ARCH. CLEVELAND."

" *Gibraltar, Spithead, August 18th, 1757.'*

" Sir,

" On *Wednesday* the 17th of *August*, about 12  
" o'Clock at Noon, I spoke with a *Dutch* Convoy  
" from *Rochelle*, there was two Men of War, one  
" of 60 Guns and one of 44 Guns, with 55 Sail  
" of Merchantmen ; the first Lieutenant of the 60  
" Gun Ship came on board me, and told me, that  
" the *French* expected a Visit from us at *Rochelle*,  
" but made no Preparation.

" I am

" Your most humble Servant,  
ARCH. CLEVELAND."

" LIEUT.

LIEUT. WILLIAM ROY Engineer being sworn, was asked, if he had as many Workmen as he chose to have, how long Time it would take to throw up a Work of three hundred Yards, so as to make it defensible against any sudden Assault ?

*A.* He believes it extremely difficult to determine any Thing of that Kind exactly, because it must depend on the Nature of the Soil where the Work is to be thrown up, and on the Number of Men, which can be employed on that Work, but he is nevertheless of opinion, that in any ordinary Soil, so small an Extent of Entrenchment as 60, 100, or 300 Yards might be thrown up, and in the Space of 2 or 3 Days made so strong, as to render it unassailable, till such Time, as it was battered and laid open by Cannon, and in the same Time he thinks even a covered Way, Glacis, and perhaps an advanced Ditch might be made.

*Q.* Had the Expedition Train of Artillery sufficient to oppose to the Cannon of a fortified Town ?

*A.* He imagines not ; believes, they had only 12 Pieces of battering Cannon ; is not certain.

*Q.* Of what Calibre were the Cannon ?

*A.* Twelve Pounders and Twenty-four Pounders, is not certain of the Number of each.

A RETURN from the Ordnance Office being inspected, it thereby appeared, that the Ordnance sent out on the Expedition is as follows, viz.

| <i>Ordnance Heavy.</i>                                                   | <i>Proportion.</i>                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brafs, mounted on travelling Carriages, completed with Limbers, &c.      |                                                                              |
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 24 \text{ Pounders} \\ 12 \end{array} \right.$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \text{—} & 6 \\ \text{—} & 4 \end{array} \right.$ |

*Ordnance*

*Ordinance Light.*

|                                                                                                |   |                         |   |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|----|
| Brams, mounted on travelling Carriages, with Limbers, Ammunition, Boxes, and Elevating Screws, | { | 6 Pounders              | — | 10 |
|                                                                                                |   | 3                       | — | 6  |
| Howitzers,                                                                                     | — | 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ Inches  | — | 2  |
| Mortars on their Beds,                                                                         | { | 10 Inches               | — | 2  |
|                                                                                                |   | 8                       | — | 2  |
|                                                                                                |   | 4 $\frac{2}{3}$ Cohorns | — | 20 |

Lieut. *Roy* being asked, what Number of Artillery Horses there were ?

Answered, He does not know exactly the Number, never having seen the Return of them.

Sir *John Mordaunt* informed the Court, the Number of Artillery Horses were Forty.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR-GENERAL EDWARD CORNWALLIS being sworn, and desired to inform the Court, what he knows in regard to the Opinion of the Sea Officers, as to the Difficulty of landing in the Night of the 28th, deposed, that he went on board the *America*, the Ship appointed for the Rendezvous, about Ten or Eleven o'Clock that Night, and was there some Time before Sir *John Mordaunt* came; there were several Captains of Men of War on board, and the Deponent found by them, that the landing, in their Opinion, would be dangerous, almost impracticable, and Madness in a Manner to attempt it. The Deponent had much Discourse with Captain *How* in particular, who expressed himself with a great deal of Warmth, and seemed very uneasy at the Undertaking; he said there would be at least six Hours in towing to get to the Shore against a Head-Sea, and likewise five or six Hours more before a second Embarkation

barkation could be made to support the first; that the Boats might be a considerable Time under the Enemies Batteries, if they had any, the Men stowed so in the Boats as not to be able to make use of their Arms, so as to make any Sort of Defence, and no Ships to protect them. Captain *How* said, though he was not upon that particular Duty, yet he thought it of such Consequence, that he could not help declaring his Opinion, and that he would mention it to the Commander in chief, when he came on board. This likewise seemed to be the general Opinion, particularly Captains *Denis*, and *Buckle*, shewed Dislike to the Attempt. After Sir *John Mordaunt* came on board the *America*, and heard the general Opinion, as to the Difficulty of landing, he talked with Major-General *Conway*, Colonel *Howard*, and the Deponent, on the Subject, and they all agreed, that the Attempt would be wrong as the Wind then was. Sir *John Mordaunt* thereupon ordered the Troops to reembark from the Boats on board the Transports, many of them having been some time embarked, and then returned on board the *Ramilies*. The Deponent staid at his Post, till it was Day-light, and until Sir *Edward Hawke* had ordered all the Boats to their different Ships again, and then went on board his own Ship the Princess *Amelia*.

Q. (By the Court) Upon the 25th, if it had then been thought adviseable to land, would the same Difficulties have occurred?

A. He does not particularly recollect; as to the Weather and the Head-Sea he thinks not; but as for the Distance of the Transports from the Place, at which it was intended to land, they were on the 25th as far, and, he rather thinks, farther off.

Q. At what Place the landing was intended to be made on the 28th?

A. In the Bay of *Chatelaillon*.

Q. How many Days Provision were the Troops to take on Shore with them?

A. He thinks, Four Days Provisions.

Q. At



Q. At what Time the Boats were ordered back again to the Transports and Men of War?

A. He can't easily say; thinks Sir *Edward Hawke's* Order for that Purpose was about an Hour and an half, or Two Hours, after the Return of Sir *John Mordaunt* on board the *Ramilies*.

Q. Whether the Purport of the Memorial of the Disposition of the Troops of *France*, which represents *ten thousand* Men only upon the Coast, from *St. Valery* to *Bourdeaux*, was communicated by Sir *John Mordaunt* to the Council of War of the 25th?

A. He can't recollect; he rather thinks not.

Q. How many Debarkations would it have taken to compleat the whole?

A. The Boats, as he understood, would have contained from 1500 to 1800 Men: and supposing all the Boats to have returned safe to the Ships, the same Number would have been landed in the second Embarkation, and by that Reckoning, it would have taken four or five Debarkations.

Q. After the Soldiers were disembarked, whether it would not have required another Embarkation at least for the Artillery, Stores, and Horses?

A. It would have taken, as he conceives, more than one Embarkation for the Artillery and Stores; and the Horses he doubted of their being able to land at all; he thinks they must have been landed in Long-boats, or swam on Shore, if it could have been effected at all.

Q. Would the Flux and Reflux of the Tide have caused any Alteration in the Matter?

A. He is not a competent Judge.

Q. Did he attend the Cabinet-Council, or any of the Meetings, before they went upon the Expedition?

A. He attended the first Cabinet-Council.

Q. From the Conversation he had there, did he not expect great Assistance from the Fleet?

A. Yes, he certainly did; but they appeared at that Meeting so totally ignorant of the Bay, of the Place

Place of Landing, or of the Coast, that it finished with sending for the Pilot, (*Thierry*, as he believes; it was a Pilot then at *Spithead*.) The other two Councils he did not attend, being ordered to the Isle of *Wight*, to take the Command of the Troops there.

Q. Were any of the Admirals, or principal Sea-Officers present at that Meeting?

A. Sir *Edward Hawke* and Vice-Admiral *Knowles* were there.

Q. (By Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*) Was Application made at that Meeting for additional Strength of Artillery?

A. He can't directly say, whether for more Artillery or not; some Demands were made; he thinks for more Troops.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MURRAY, being again called in, was examined.

Q. On the 29th, when he was ordered by Sir *John Mordaunt* to reconnoitre the Coast, what Observations he reported to Sir *John*?

A. Colonel *Howard*, Lieutenant-Colonel *Wolfe*, Captain *How*, and the Depoñent, went on board the *Viper* Sloop, which Sloop lay nearest the Shore in the Bay of *Chatelaillon*. They viewed the Coast from the Top of the Awning, (which is elevated above the Deck) and saw a Tent and six Guns naked upon the bluff Point of *Chatelaillon*. From that Point to the Point *Angolin* they computed it to be about three Miles and an half, or four; all which afforded a good Landing; but there was a Ridge of Sand Hills, that ran from Point to Point quite along the Bay, within about forty Yards of High Water Mark, to the best of his Judgment. These Sand-Hills seemed to be about 25 or 30 Feet, in general, perpendicular Height, and capable of concealing any Number of Troops from their Sight. They saw no Troops, Redoubts, or Batteries, (excepting the Battery he has mentioned) to oppose a Debarkation. The Captain  
of

of the *Viper* Sloop told them, that upon the 26th he had seen a considerable Body of Troops, with several Pair of Colours, march along the Shore from *Récbelle*, and that they encamped in the Bay that Afternoon behind the Sand Hills; which Sand Hills the Captain of the *Viper* called an Entrenchment; that the Men went to Work the same Afternoon upon these Sand Hills; and the next Day their Tents were more covered, intercepted by the Work they had thrown up, and at last they were intirely covered, so that he could not see them from his Awning. That, however, the 28th, (the Day before their coming on board) he had seen them from his Main-top; but that Captain *How* had been that Morning of the 29th to his Main-top, but saw neither Troops nor Encampment. Captain *Cooper*, Commander of the Ship that laid next to the *Viper* Sloop, told them he had seen the Troops from his Top-gallant-mast-head that same Morning, that being an higher Ship.—From the *Viper* Sloop they rowed into the Shore, as near as they thought it prudent; but saw nothing more from the Boats, than they had done from the Awning of the Ship. When they returned, they reported this to Sir *John Mordaunt*, and, as he remembers, also mentioned to him, that the Ground beyond the Sand-Hills was such, as Cavalry could act in.

Q. At what Time of the Day did they make this Report to Sir *John Mordaunt*?

A. About Five o'Clock in the Afternoon of the 29th

Q. (By Desire of Sir *John Mordaunt*) As he reconnoitred that Coast, what Number of Troops, under a good Officer, does he imagine sufficient to have defended the Bay of *Chatelaillon* against their landing, had it been attempted?

A. It is Matter of Opinion, and depends greatly on the Capacity of the Officer; he thinks, against two thousand Men, which he believes was the whole Number the Boats could have embarked at once, one Batallion of Infantry, and two Squadrons of Dragoons,

goons, with six Field-pieces, might have rendered their landing ineffectual, had it been made on the 29th, when the Wind was as strong, as it was on the 28th. —In his Opinion, if the Wind was to the Westward, they could not have landed at all.

Q. (By the Court) How near it was necessary for the Boats to have gone to the six Pieces of Cannon mentioned in his Evidence ?

A. Had they gone down to the *Angolin*, they might have been intirely out of the Reach of the Guns, and had they gone directly under the bluff Point, they would not long have been annoyed by them.

Q. Did he ever hear, how far it was from *Rochelle* to the Place, where they were to land ?

A. From the Point of *Angolin* does not appear to be above three Miles from *Rochelle*, as far as he could judge from the Eye, and from the Map he has seen ; but to the Cod of the Bay, believes, about five Miles.

Q. Whether the Captain of the *Viper* mentioned the Number of the Troops he had seen ?

A. He thinks the Captain mentioned having seen six Colours ; he can't take upon him to say, whether he mentioned how many Troops.

MAJOR-GENERAL CORNWALLIS was further examined.

Q. Whether Sir *John Mordaunt* did summon all the Land-Officers of the Council of War to consider of a Letter of Sir *Edward Hawke*, proposing a Return to *England* ?

A. On the 29th of *September*, the Deponent received a Letter from Sir *John Mordaunt* in the Middle of the Day, desiring he would attend him that Afternoon on board the *Ramilies*. The Deponent went accordingly, and after having been there some Time, Sir *John Mordaunt* (he believes it was then about the Hour of Seven) sent in for him and Colonel *Howard*, Major-General *Conway* being already with him. Sir *John* told them, that he had received a Letter from Sir *Edward Hawke*, which he gave the Deponent to read,

read, and which he believes to be the same, as now produced in Court, viz.

*Ramilies, Basque Road, Sept. 29, 1757.*

“ S I R,

“ Should the General Officers of the Troops have  
“ no farther military Operations to propose, considerable enough to authorize my detaining the Squadron under my Command longer here, I beg Leave  
“ to acquaint you, that I intend to proceed with it  
“ for *England* without Loss of Time.

“ I am, S I R,

“ Your most Obedient,

“ Most Humble Servant,

To Sir *John*  
*Mordaunt.*

“ E D. H A W K E.”

And he asked the Deponent's Opinion, as also that of the others, what was proper to be done upon it; the Deponent told Sir *John*, he knew pretty well his Opinion; for that he had constantly been against landing, since the Council of War of the 25th, and that every Day and every Hour they staid, he should be more and more against it; that there was no Service of Consequence to be done, and therefore he was of Opinion to return.

Q. Did they not all unanimously concur in Opinion to return?

A. He thinks Major-General *Conway* did hesitate upon it; but did afterwards come into the general Opinion for returning.

Q. (By the Court) Whether Sir *Edward Hawke* was on board at the Time?

A. He was on board; but not present at the Council, or Meeting.

Q. Were not they, who were assembled, the four Officers appointed for the holding Councils of War at Land?

A. Yes, as he understood it.

Q. Can

Q. Can he give any Reason, why the Admirals and the eldest Sea-Captain were not at that Council of War?

A. He cannot.

Q. Did Major-General *Conway*, when he hesitated, urge any Objections?

A. He thinks nothing new, or that tended to convince the Deponent at all; he did not propose any Operations, as he remembers.

Q. What was doing the 26th, and 27th?

A. A Proposal was made, as he believes, on the 26th, is not sure, by Major-General *Conway* about landing on the Isle of *Oleron*; Sir *Edward Hawke* made some Objection; the Deponent likewise was of a different Opinion, as thinking it tended to nothing of Consequence.

Q. (By Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire) What was his, Sir *John Mordaunt's*, Opinion at that Consultation?

A. Sir *John Mordaunt* said, that, if it was the general Opinion, he should concur in it.

In regard to the 27th, the Deponent informed the Court, that he received a Message from Sir *John Mordaunt* that Day, to come down to the Isle of *Aix*; he accordingly went there in the Morning, where he met Sir *John Mordaunt*, with Sir *Edward Hawke*, Vice-Admiral *Knowles*, and Major-General *Conway*, (whether Colonel *Howard* was there, he can't say) they seemed to be employed in viewing Fort *Fouras* with Spying-Glasses and Telescopes, to see what they could make of that Fort; the Deponent could make nothing of it himself at so great a Distance, so as to form any Kind of Judgment about it. After having been there some Time, the Deponent asked Sir *John Mordaunt* if he had any Commands for him, and Sir *John* answering him, that he had not, he returned on board his own Ship.

Q. (By Sir *John Mordaunt's* Desire) Did he receive a Summons that Evening to attend a Council of War the next Day, to consider of an Attack of the Forts on the Mouth of the *Charente*?

G

A. He

A. He did receive a Summons to attend a Council of War the next Day; can't say now, what it contained.

Q. (By the Court). While they were at *Aix* on the 27th, was there any Consultation between the Generals and Admirals?

A. They did at Times talk together, but the Deponent did not hear that Discourse; there was no general Consultation.

VICE-ADMIRAL KNOWLES was again called in, and it being observed to Sir *John Mordaunt*, that the Minutes of the Council of War, which speak only in general Terms of "several Informations received of Troops assembled in the Neighbourhood," would not be sufficient to establish any particular Intelligence, he might think material for his Defence; Sir *John Mordaunt* desired, that his Question of Yesterday might again be proposed to Vice-Admiral Knowles, *viz.*

Q. Does he recollect any thing relating to a Report made to the Admiral by Captain *Proby*, of his having spoke to a *Dutch* Master, who informed him, that the *French* had made great Preparations at *Rochelle* and *St Martin's*?

The Vice-Admiral answered, that he cannot particularly charge his Memory, who it was that was mentioned to have given the Report; but that Sir *Edward Hawke* did deliver in several Papers of Intelligence, which he had gained during the Passage; and amongst them mention was made of the Enemy's having Knowledge of their Approach; and it was taken for granted at the Council of War of the 25th, that the *French* had Intelligence of their Designs; and the Deponent is confirmed in their having a Knowledge of it at *Brest*, because he read several Letters taken in the *Emerald*, the *Southampton's* Prize, giving an Account thereof, and of what Preparations the *French* were making.

Being desired to explain his Answer, whether from the Intelligence he refers to, he understood, that the *French*

*French* had Knowledge of any particular Object of this Expedition, or whether they apprehended some Attempt upon their Coasts in general? and whether the Preparations were confined to *Brest*, from an Apprehension that the Armament might be intended against that Place, or whether they were general along the Coast?

He said, that he cannot be certain, as to the whole of the Intelligence; but from those particular Letters taken in the *Emerald*, he understood, that the *French* had Notice of a Design somewhere upon the Coast, and were making Preparations in general.

Some of the Witnesses having mentioned Vice-Admiral *Knowles* as being present, when a Discourse was had by Sir *Edward Hawke*, touching an Attack intended to be made upon Fort *Fouras* by Sea, he was desired to inform the Court, what he knows concerning that Intention, or the Practicability of such Attack:

Sir *John Mordaunt* desiring, that unless the Answer tended to make either for him, or against him, it might be waved, as it would prolong the Trial,—

Vice-Admiral *Knowles* took that Opportunity of declaring, that if he knew any thing against Sir *John*, he would declare it publickly, and not bring it out by Piece-meal; but that he does not: On the contrary, he does in his Conscience believe, Sir *John* has done every thing, that becomes an experienced General, to the best of his Judgment, for the Service of his King and Country, and would have done more, if it could have been done:—

The Vice-Admiral then deposed in Answer to the Question, that after the Surrender of the Isle of *Aix* Sir *Edward Hawke* told him, the Pilot of the Ship *Magnanime* had offered to carry her in, to batter Fort *Fouras*; he does not recollect, at what Distance; the Deponent objected against the *Magnanime*, as she drew at least a Foot more Water than the *Barfleur*, and proposed that Ship instead of her, as being of greater Force, as well as an old Ship, and her Loss therefore immaterial. Sir *Edward Hawke* directed the Depo-



nent to have the *Barfleur* lightened immediately for that Purpose. When he returned on board his own Ship he directly sent for Captain *Graves* of the *Barfleur*, and told him Sir *Edward's* Intention; the Captain reply'd, his Ship was on Ground, where she then laid, being, to the best of his Judgment, more than five Miles distant from the Fort. He has since heard, that Colonel *Brudenell* was on board of her at that Time. Upon this several Masters, together with Pilots, were directed to go sounding, particularly the Master of the *Barfleur*, and of his own Ship the *Neptune*. On his acquainting Sir *Edward Hawke* with the Impracticability of getting the *Barfleur* in, and the Masters having made their Reports of the Soundings, that Intention was laid aside, as impossible. Some Days after, he can't be positive, but believes after the first Council of War, Sir *Edward* directed the Deponent to carry in the two Bomb-Ketches, to try to bombard the Fort; the Deponent immediately gave their Captains Orders so to do, and directed the Pilot of the *Magnanime* to conduct the Infernal Bomb in, and the other to follow. In attempting to get in, the Pilot ran the *Infernal* aground, where she laid some considerable Time; two Row-Galleys, seeing her alone (for she had out sailed the other Bomb, and was at least two Miles from her) made to attack the *Infernal*, which the Deponent perceiving hastened on board, and gave a Signal for all the Boats, mann'd and armed, to go to her Assistance, and went himself in the *Coventry* Frigate; on which the Galleys retired, after firing a great many Shot at the Bomb-Ketch.—When the Ketch was on Ground she was a long Way without the Reach of her Shells, with the greatest Requisite of Powder (which he knows will fly two Miles and two thirds) having thrown several, which fell greatly short. The *Coventry*, in attempting to get to the Bomb, ran on shore five different Times.—After the Tide had flowed, and the Bomb-Ketch floated, she got under Sail again, and worked nearer to *Fouras*,

as near as her Draught of Water would let her, and then threw several Shells more, none of which did reach.—He added, that he is confident, if it had been in the Power of Man to have got any Ship or Vessel in for that Purpose, Fort *Fouras* would have been attacked by Sea by Order of Sir *Edward Hawke*; and the Deponent, in Conformity to his Commands, would have effected it.—Likewise in regard to a Proposal, that has been mentioned of attacking *Fouras* by Land at the same Time it was attacked by Sea, as an Officer, he declares it to be impossible, because the Shot from the Ships, which missed, would have cut the Army behind it to Pieces.

The following Expression being observed in the Minutes taken by Vice-Admiral *Knowles* at the Council of War of the 25th, as by him laid before the Court Yesterday—"Pilot *Neptune*, a Ditch and "Sluices—Prisoners *Do.* and *contra*," he was desired to inform the Court, whether any of the Prisoners examined at the Council of War denied the Circumstance of a wet Ditch, or of Sluices?—To this he answered, that some of the Prisoners asserted, that there was a wet Ditch all round, and some that there was not; but does not remember any said positively, *there were not Sluices.*

Q. As his Minutes shew him to have been very particular in regard to the Proceedings of the Council of War of the 25th, can he recollect, whether the Import of the Memorial, giving an Account of the Disposition of the *French* Troops, produced at a Cabinet Council in *London*, was communicated to that Council of War?

A. He cannot recollect.

Q. Whether *Thierry* was pitched upon for conducting in the Bomb-Ketch, as the best Pilot?

A. Yes.

Q. If *Thierry* the Pilot had been lost, had they any other Pilot, who knew that Part of the Coast?

A. None.

SIR JOHN MORDAUNT acquainted the Court, that he should not trouble them with the Examination of any more Witnesses, but delivered a Paper containing a few Observations, which he desired might be read.

COLONEL WOLFE being made acquainted with Lieutenant Colonel *Murray's* Evidence, in regard to Troops seen on the Isle of *Rbé* from the Poop of the *Ramilies* on the 23d September, which Circumstance is not mentioned by Colonel *Wolfe*, who is said to have been in Company ; as also in regard to Vessels being seen to pass from the Isle of *Rbé* to the Continent, or from the Continent to the Island,—— said, that he does recollect seeing some Troops through Glasses, and thinks likewise Colours ; but did not attend to the Matter sufficiently to be so particular, as Lieutenant Colonel *Murray* has been.

THEN the Paper delivered by Sir *John Mordaunt* was read, agreeable to his Desire, in Words following ;

My LORD,

‘ Before I put a final Conclusion to the Trouble  
‘ I have given the Court, I hope you will excuse my  
‘ detaining you a few Minutes longer ; in order to  
‘ make some Observations that have occurred, and  
‘ which I have ordered to be put together, during  
‘ the Course of my Proofs.

‘ By a Question asked one of my Witnesses by the  
‘ Judge Advocate, it seems, as if he thought, I could  
‘ have called a Council of War upon the 24th ; but  
‘ I dare say it will be remembered, that the Time of  
‘ calling a Council of War was not prescribed by my  
‘ Instructions, and therefore I can be guilty of no  
‘ Act of Disobedience in calling it at that Time,  
‘ which I thought most proper for obtaining the  
‘ End proposed by it. It cannot have escaped the  
‘ Court, that it is proved, that the Afternoon and  
‘ Evening of the 24th were employed in endeavouring to gain Intelligence necessary for our  
‘ Actions, or Deliberations. And the Court will also remember, that the Members of the Council of  
‘ War

War were on board several Ships at many Miles distant from each other, and Colonel *Howard* at the Isle of *Aix* ; but indeed Admiral *Knowles* has communicated to the Court the Difficulties, or rather the Impossibility, of assembling a Council that Night, if it had been wanted.

I recollect, that Mr. *Pitt* mentioned a Circumstance, of which it may be expected I should take some Notice; which was, that the Paper produced by him, containing the Number and Employment of the *French* Forces, had been confirmed by subsequent Intelligence.

Colonel *Clerk* too, it may be proper to observe; said, if I recollect it right, that several People, whom he had seen since his Return, had confirmed him in the Opinion he had first formed of the State of *Rochebort*.

If Observations of this Kind had been proposed by the Judge Advocate to have been given in Evidence, I should have objected to it, as improper Evidence. What Mr. *Pitt* alluded to, has not been explained, nor laid before the Court, and like Mr. *Clerk's* Discourse confirming his Opinion, is all subsequent to the Transaction now under Examination: It is avowedly subsequent to our Return, and therefore could never operate upon my Conduct, nor influence the Judgment I was by his Majesty's Instructions to form upon the Spot. It seems therefore preposterous, to make that Evidence of Disobedience of Orders, which must relate to such Opinion, as I was able to form before these Facts were known. My Judgment can only be tried by the Proofs, on which it was formed. If the Judgment was upright upon those, it can never be made otherwise by other Proofs, not then in my Power; besides, the Court will also consider the Absurdity of admitting such Evidence; for, if the present differs from that obtained upon the Spot, Intelligence still subsequent may hereafter be obtained to contradict the present.

‘ Another necessary Observation seems to be, That  
 ‘ the Resolution of the Council of War of the 25th  
 ‘ was not, That it was impracticable to land, but  
 ‘ that *such an Attempt*, that is, an Attempt to land  
 ‘ in order to *attack Rochefort* according to the se-  
 ‘ cond Instruction, was neither advisable nor prac-  
 ‘ ticable.

‘ I have heard, that several Persons have men-  
 ‘ tioned Escalades succeeding during a Siege, but I  
 ‘ am sure this Court will remember, that, in all such  
 ‘ Instances, Surprise has been essential to the Success.

‘ Capt. *Cleveland*’s Letter shews, that the *French*  
 ‘ expected a Visit upon their Coast. Indeed at *Ro-  
 ‘ chelle* they seemed to have had no Fears about it ;  
 ‘ they made no new Preparations upon that Account ;  
 ‘ they are known to have been sufficiently secure  
 ‘ without them.

‘ I think I scarce need remind the Court, that, as  
 ‘ it was not the Intention at home, that *Rochefort*  
 ‘ should be attacked any other Way than by Sur-  
 ‘ prize or Escalade, so the Artillery, &c. were not  
 ‘ designed for, or adapted to a regular Attack. The  
 ‘ Horses did not, in Fact, exceed forty.

‘ This Court will please to remember, that the  
 ‘ 26th, 27th, 28th, and Part of the 29th, were  
 ‘ employed in the Demolition of the Works of Fort  
 ‘ *Aix*, according to the Instructions, to demolish  
 ‘ all the Works we should make ourselves Masters  
 ‘ of.

‘ This Province was assigned to Admiral *Knowles*.  
 ‘ How the Generals were employed, Major-General  
 ‘ *Cornwallis* has just given an Account.

‘ I have now finished the Evidence I proposed to  
 ‘ lay before the Court. I hope I have answered every  
 ‘ Part of the Charge made against me. It is a very  
 ‘ heavy Charge—A criminal Disobedience of his  
 ‘ Majesty’s Orders.

‘ It does not lie upon me to impeach the Propriety  
 ‘ of the Equipment : It might be proper to be made,  
 ‘ though it could not be successful.

“ I did every Thing in my Power to execute faithfully the Instructions given me ; the Trust reposed in me.

“ The Court perceives by the Instructions, that upon the Spot, with the Assistance appointed by the King for me, I was to judge of the Fitness of acting,—of the Practicability of making the Attempt, before I put the Flower of the *British* Troops to Hazard, or risked the Honour of the *British* Arms.

“ The Subject was important ; I had therefore Recourse to those appointed by the King to assist me.

“ We could not be ignorant, that our Judgment would be unpopular ; but it was our Duty to take Care that it should be honest and becoming Officers.

“ Upon that Judgment I still rely ; it was formed in Pursuance of the Power given by the Instructions, and can never, I apprehend, be deemed a Disobedience of them.

“ There have been many Instances of Officers tried (perhaps too for supposed Disobedience) when the genuine Complaint was, that they could not be successful. But I have this Satisfaction, that as my Defence rests upon the concurrent unanimous Opinion of all the principal Officers employed with me, so the Cause of Commanders in Chief tried in my Name, is to be determined by Officers, who have Ability to discern the Justice of my Case, and Sensibility to feel the Delicacy of it.

“ With these Sentiments I submit myself to the Judgment of the Court.”

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE briefly submitted to the Court his Opinion, that subsequent Confirmations of Intelligence, as they could not have any Influence on the Resolutions, when taken, are not proper Evidence ; and, if any such have appeared, in the Course of the Proceedings, on either Side, they ought unquestionably to be laid out of the Case. With regard

gard to Lieutenant Colonel *Clerk's* Evidence, he does not recollect any Mention of Information obtained by him, since his Return to *England*, either in Confirmation, or Contradiction of his former Account of *Rockefort*.

But the Argument urged by Sir *John Mordaunt* in the Beginning of his Defence, against the admitting in Evidence that Intelligence, which was communicated to the Commanders of the Expedition at the Cabinet Council in *England*, he conceives to be without Foundation, as it is not produced as Evidence to prove any particular Act of Disobedience (the Evidence of the supposed Disobedience in this Case being the Notoriety of the Return to *England*, without having attempted a Descent) but is only introduced to shew the Practicability of the Enterprize; and it would be as unreasonable to set aside this Intelligence, when the Question turns upon the Practicability, as to deprive Sir *John Mordaunt* of the Use of any Intelligence received previous to their sailing from *Spithead*, or of the Argument raised from the unavoidable Detention of the Troops in the Isle of *Wight*; which Circumstances were equally known to the Government, and both previous to the Orders signified by Mr. Secretary *Pitt* in his Letters of the 5th and 15th of *September*.

As to the Use endeavoured to be made of Port *L'Orient* being permitted to remain in the Instructions, (though the Ministry seemed to have given up the Thoughts of an Attack upon that Place) in order to govern the Construction of the other Article of the Instructions, which relates to *Rockefort*, the Latitude or Power of judging being expressed by the Word *practicable* in both Articles,—The Judge Advo-observed, that there is a manifest distinction,—The Article relating to *Rockefort*, directing an Attempt with a View to that particular Object, *if found practicable*; in the other Case, Port *L'Orient* and *Bourdeaux* are recommended, as the most important Ob-  
jects

jects of his Majesty's Arms ; and it is Ordered, that an Attempt should be made, successively, on both, or either, of those Places, as should be judged practicable; or on any other Place that should be thought most advisable, from *Bourdeaux* homeward to *Havre*: the Judgment of the Practicability being evidently intended to be made, upon the Spot, by the one Article, and not so, by the other.

As to the several Arguments, which go to the Impracticability of a Descent only, he submitted to the Consideration of the Court, whether they are not altogether defeated by the subsequent Resolution of the 28th of *September*, whereby the landing is determined not only to be practicable, but advisable, and to be made with all possible Dispatch ; especially as no material Intelligence had in the mean Time been gained, which shewed Fort *Fouras* to be more assailable on the Land-side, than they had before Reason to apprehend.

He also recommended an Attention to the Dates of the several Resolutions and Proceedings, as nothing but what was anterior to the Council of War of the 25th, and known at that Time to the Commanders, can be considered as having any Effect upon that Deliberation, and therefore on the one Hand, all Troops seen from the *Viper* Sloop,—the most considerable Number (being from 800 to 1000) seen by Major General *Conway*,—and all other Obstacles subsequent to the Date of the 25th, will be laid out of the Case ; as will on the other Hand the Confirmation of Lieutenant Colonel *Clerk*'s Opinion, obtained from the *French* Engineer on the 26th ; which Circumstance alone, supposing the Resolution taken on the 25th, of laying aside the Design upon *Rockefort*, to have been justifiable and right, can hardly be insisted upon as a sufficient Motive for reviving that Consideration.

ADJOURNED till *Monday*, the 19th Instant, at Ten o'Clock in the Forenoon.

*MONDAY,*



MONDAY, 19th of DECEMBER, 1757.

THE COURT met according to Adjournment.

Some Members hearing that Admiral Sir *Edward Hawke* is arrived in Town since the last Sitting of this Court, expressed a Desire, that he should be examined, as a Witness, upon this Tryal for their fuller Information; and Doubts thereupon arising, whether, the Evidence both on the Part of the Crown and of the Prisoner being ended, the said Sir *Edward Hawke* shall now be examined as a Witness?

The Matter was fully deliberated upon, and the Question being put, it was resolved in the Affirmative.

Ordered, That Admiral Sir *Edward Hawke* be desired to attend this Court To-morrow Morning at Ten o'Clock.

Ordered, That Lieutenant General Sir *John Mordaunt* have Notice of the above Resolution of the Court; and that he will be at Liberty to propose any Questions, he shall think proper; as likewise to produce any Witnesses, to obviate or explain any Evidence, which may arise from the Examination of Sir *Edward Hawke*.

The Court perused and considered the Minutes of their former Proceedings, until the Hour of Three,

And then ADJOURNED till To-morrow Morning, Ten o'Clock.

TUESDAY, 20th of DECEMBER, 1757.

THE COURT being met pursuant to Adjournment, ADMIRAL SIR EDWARD HAWKE was sworn, and questioned,

Whether at any, and what Time, a Proposal was made to him to lay a Ship to batter *Fouras*?

A. On the 24th of *September*.

Q. Whether he approved of that Proposal?

A. He did; the Pilot of the *Magnanime* was examined as to the Strength of the Place, and Depth of Water

Water near it: Elated with the Success of the 23d, and fond of the *Magnanime*, he said at first, before Captain *Mordaunt*, he would carry her in, and destroy the Fort. As the Deponent had attentively considered the Shore, and was sensible, that the *Magnanime*, which drew more Water than some of our three-decked Ships, could not be brought near enough to batter the Fort, he gave the Pilot's Gasconade Time to subside; and then asked him, if he could carry a Sixty Gun Ship in against it: He answered, her Metal was not weighty enough, as there were Twenty-four Pounders in the Fort. He then proposed to him to lighten the *Barfleur* two Feet (this second Conversation was upon the Quarter Deck, by the Intervention of a Man well versed in such *French*, as those Kind of People speak) The Pilot seemed some time satisfied with this, and in Consequence the Deponent prepared an Order to Vice Admiral *Knowles*, to lighten the *Barfleur*, and in the mean Time gave him a verbal Order; who immediately went away to give the necessary Directions, and to enquire into the Practicability of the Attempt. — The Pilot now recollected himself, and declared, that, even thus lightened, the *Barfleur* could not be brought near enough; that when she could come nearest at the Top of High Water, on the Ebb, she must sink in the Mud six Feet or more, from which he could not answer whether she would rise. Upon Tryal afterwards, the Pilot could not carry a Bomb Ketch within Random Shot of the Fort, as Mr. *Knowles* informed him; in whom, as being the second Sea Officer in Command, he apprehends, he might safely confide for that Information. — The Deponent declares, he should as readily have ordered an Attack upon *Fouras*, as he had done upon *Aix*, had it been practicable by Shipping; though it was his Opinion then, and still is, that an Attack on either had no Connection with the principal Object in his Majesty's secret Instructions, unless the Guns from either of those Fortifications could have prevented the Boats from landing. --- (There they certainly could, but not  
in

in another Place.)--The principal Motive which induced him to give the Order for an Attack on the Isle of *Aix*, was, that at the Council at Lord *Holderneffe's*, it was thought necessary by several of the Council, who laid their Fingers on that Fort, imagining the Guns from thence could have annoyed the Boats in landing at the Place, which then seemed to them, from the Chart, the most reasonable. But *Chatelaillon* afterwards appearing, on the 24th of *September*, to be the proper Landing Place (from whence, according to his Information, there was a good Road to *Rochefort*) *Fouras* did not, at that Time, appear to him of so great Consequence, though he came readily into the Proposal. He added, that the Pilot, upon Examination at the Council, appeared to him to be very ignorant of the Place: And even at the Attack of the Fort of *Aix*, he observes, that the *Magnanime* sewed in the Mud, though *Tbierry* was on board.

Q. Whether, before they went from *England*, any Landing-place for the Troops was proposed, and by whom?

A. He does not remember, that a Landing-place was talked of, and that it was proposed to land the Troops either on one Side, or the other, of that small Neck of Land, which runs up near *Fouras* towards *Rochelle*: *Tbierry*, the Pilot, said, he supposed there might be a Landing-place there, or thereabouts; said, as he thinks, if they could not land on one Side, they might land on the other; and the Deponent believes, it was farther said, if they should not be able to land there, that possibly a Landing-place would be found upon sounding and reconnoitring the Coast, somewhere thereabouts. The Deponent just now recollects, another Place was talked of at the Council in *London*, which was from *Fouras* towards *Fort la Point*, where seemed to be a little sandy Bay, which was at first judged to be a Landing-place; but little stress was laid upon that, for he believes, upon considering it, it was thought otherwise.

Q. Whether

Q. Whether the Place proposed by *Thierry* the Pilot at the Council in *London* was reconnoitred, and Soundings made thereat, and whether it proved to be a Place proper for landing ?

A. His Order, directed to Admiral *Brodrick* and the three Captains, was to reconnoitre the Coast from Point *du Cbi*, near *Rochelle*, down to Fort *Pouras*, which includes that Place ; and their Report mentions no other Landing-place, than *Chatelaillon*.

Q. Whether they had any other Pilots on board the Fleet tolerably well acquainted with that Coast ?

A. They had Pilots capable of carrying Ships into the *Basque* Road, provided the Weather was clear, and they could see their Marks upon the Isles of *Rbé* and *Oleron*, but had he not had those Pilots, he would have ventured to carry the Fleet into the *Basque* Road himself ; the Chart of the *Neptune François*, which is well set down, would have afforded Assistance therein.

Q. Whether *Thierry* was looked upon, as a skilful judicious Pilot, and thoroughly acquainted with the Coast near *Rochefort* ?

A. *Thierry* was looked upon to be a good Pilot for the Road, and for the anchoring of Ships both in the Road and about the Isle of *Aix* ; but, from what Observations the Deponent made, seemed to have very little Knowledge of the Shore ; believes, he never was upon every Part of it ; and it appeared to the Deponent at the Council in *England*, that he was not acquainted with every Spot of Ground ; thinks, the Pilot himself mentioned, only, having been on Shore somewhere near the Fort.

Q. As he attended several of the Councils before he went upon the Expedition, was it believed, that Troops could be landed in small Boats either at *Chatelaillon*, or near *Fouras*, under the Protection of the Ships ?

A. He does now recollect the Pilot said, “ If you can’t land at those Places without being annoyed from the Fort, you will probably find a Landing-place about *Chatelaillon* ;” but don’t remember,

that the Pilot cleared up to the Council, that the Frigates could come near enough to the Shore to protect the Landing.

Q. When they came upon the Spot, did they find it possible to bring the Men of War near enough to the Shore to protect the Landing?

A. Certainly not.

Q. Mention having been made by Vice-Admiral Knowles of the Council of War of the 25th having broke up at 12 unfinished,—At what Time did that Council of War meet, and how long they sat?

A. He, with Sir John Mordaunt, went on the 25th early in the Morning on board the *Neptune*, and the Result of that Council was not actually finished that Night; they had chiefly come to a Resolution over Night, but the Result was wrote out fair, and signed on board the Deponent's Ship the next Morning.

Q. What Time, he imagines, it would have taken up to have made the whole Landing of the Troops?

A. That at the last Council of War, in which it was determined to land, he made a Proposal to the General Officers, in order to save Time, that, if they approved of it, he would immediately order all the Transports as close to the Shore, as they could possibly go, and the Frigates within them, at the Place where the Troops were to land, that they might get on Shore with the greater Expedition: This Proposal was seconded by Mr. Knowles, and by the rest of the Sea-Officers, but was objected to, principally by Major-General Conway, who urged, that to send the Transports in there in the Afternoon, would point out to the French the Place, at which they intended to land; he does not remember Sir John Mordaunt said any thing on the Subject, and thence concluded, he agreed in Opinion with Major-General Conway. The Deponent explained, that the Frigates were meant as a Protection to the Transports, to preserve them from being fired, or receiving any Injury. He remarks one other Thing, that although landing Troops in the Night

Night is against his own Opinion, as Men are liable to Surprize, and many Accidents, where they do not know the Ground, yet he submitted that to the General Officers, as supposing them much better Judges of it than himself, and made no Objection thereto; but with a View that the greater Expedition should be made in landing the Troops that Night, he gave Orders to the Agent of the Transports on board his own Quarter-deck, and to one or two of his own Lieutenants, to go on board the Transports, with a positive Direction from him, that at the Instant the first Body of Troops was gone from the Ships, the Transports should get under Sail immediately, and run close into the Shore, where the Troops were to land, in order that the second Body of Troops might be landed with much greater Expedition than the first.

The foregoing Question, *viz.* "How long, he imagines, it would have taken up to have made the whole Landing of the Troops," being repeated with this Addition, "at any Time, supposing all Circumstances the most favourable"?

The Admiral said, he cannot answer that Question with any Sort of Certainty; they might have landed with great Expedition, had the Transports been as near, as they could get to the Shore.

Q. Would not the Flux and Reflux of the Tide have made an Alteration in the Time of Landing?

A. It certainly would; it would not have taken the same Time, had the Transports got under Sail, and ran close into Shore.

Q. Whether any of the Officers made a Report to him, that they had delivered his Orders on board the Transports, relative to their getting under Sail?

A. To the best of his Remembrance, they did; the Agent of the Transports particularly, as he remembers, told him, that he had; and he cannot doubt of their having been delivered, as he gave out those Orders in Person, (which is not usual for the Admiral) on Purpose to give them more Force, and that they might be the more fully understood.

H

Q. As

Q. As the Court has been informed of Fifty-one light Horse, and Forty Artillery Horses being on board the Fleet, and as the Transports could not come near the Shore, whether it was practicable to disembark the Horse?

A. The Transports would have come within a tolerable Distance of the Shore about High-Water, but he understood the Horses were to be put into the Long-boats, and towed on Shore; which he apprehends would have been effected without any great Difficulty; but he knows very little of disembarking Horses, never happening to have seen any disembarked.

Q. What was his Objection to attending a Council of War on the 29th of September?

A. He can only say, he never was pressed to it by Sir *John Mordaunt*; he never did deny a Council of War to Sir *John* with a View to distress him; but when he saw the Troops did not land the Night of the 28th, and Major General *Conway*, with Colonels *Wolfe* and *Howard*, having reconnoitred the Coast over again on the next Day, and no Application then made to him to land them, he was thereby induced to write the Letter, he did to Sir *John*; not in the least doubting, they had good and satisfactory Reasons for it, and supposing the General Officers to act with the same View as himself, that of doing their Duty to the best of their Judgment.

Q. (*By Sir John Mordaunt's Desire.*) Did not he, Sir *John Mordaunt*, the very Morning of the Day, on which they came to a Resolution not to land, speak to him about having a General Council of War, and did he not return for Answer, that there was no Occasion for the Sea Officers, as it was a Land Operation only?

A. Yes; he recollects, it was about Noon, (when he spoke to Sir *John* to the same Purpose, as he afterwards wrote in his Letter.) — And his Reason for it was this, that he always looked upon it to be his Duty, as Admiral, to convoy the Troops to the Road  
of

of *Beaufort*, and there, if possible, to find out a Landing-place for them, and, in case of their landing, to give them all the Assistance in his Power for that Purpose; but with respect to the Question, "Whether they should land, or not land" (tho' he would have signed to any Proposal he thought right, and would have acquiesced in any justifiable Measure, yet) he constantly thought, it was the Part of the Generals to determine that Question by themselves, nor should he have given Sir *John* the Answer he did, but from its being his sincere Opinion;—he looked upon them to be good and gallant Officers, and Officers of Service, and therefore could not but suppose they were infinitely better Judges of their own business, than he could be. It was from the same Opinion of their Knowledge in their own Profession, that he assented to signing the Resolutions of the first Council of War, "That it was not practicable to take *Roche-fort* by "Eskalade," and he at that Time expressed a Desire, that the Land Officers should give their Opinion by themselves, as he thought it a Matter of Judgment, which merely related to them, and that the Sea had nothing to do with it, farther than telling them, they had found out a Landing-place, and were ready to land the Troops, if they thought proper, and to give them all the Assistance in their Power. — When the Deponent mentioned this, Major General *Conway* said, as he remembers, "Why really I am of Opinion, "as Sir *Edward Hawke* says, it is a Matter of Opinion of our own;" but in Confidence of the Abilities of the Generals, he nevertheless acquiesced in their Opinion, of the Impracticability of taking *Roche-fort* by an Eskalade or Storm; however, though he assented to the not landing upon that Footing, he did not give it, as his Opinion, that the Troops should not land at all, for any other Attempt, which the General Officers should find proper and expedient for the Service; on the contrary, he then urged the Necessity, there appeared to him, of doing something agreeable to the King's Instructions.

Sir



1

7

# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

## PROCEEDINGS

OF A

GENERAL COURT-MARTIAL,

Upon the Trial of Lieutenant General  
Sir JOHN MORAUNT,

(As published by Authority.)

WITH

An ANSWER to the Expedition against  
ROCHEFORT, fairly stated. In a  
LETTER to the Right Honorable the  
Author of the CANDID REFLECTIONS,  
&c.

To which is added,

A N A P P E N D I X.

Being a REPLY to the MONITOR of Saturday  
the 21st Instant.

---

By the AUTHOR of, The CANDID REFLECTIONS.

---

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A

# LETTER, &c.

S I R,



YOU will hardly accuse of impropriety this address to you, who have drawn it upon yourself, by making it an indispensable duty to me, to clear up certain mistakes into which I apprehend you have been betrayed, by that suspicion of party-spirit, to which so many of our political writers are but too justly liable.

B

It

It is so rare to meet with any who judge of things by the sole standard of truth, without respect to their connections with the influence or interest of particular persons in power, or wanting to be in power, that I do not in the least wonder at your confounding me with the croud; especially as my opinion happened to differ so much from your's : I will not say that of your party, because I will not allow myself the liberty you have taken with me, of pronouncing you regularly enlisted in one. The worst I will in return suppose of you is, your being carried down the stream of that popular prejudice, which may be called the error of the day.

Unfortunately, at this very crisis, when every true Englishman has the greatest reason to spurn all attempts at imposing on his understanding, or misleading his judgment by false information, or false reasoning, we see hardly any thing else practised ; and what is stranger yet, the deceit welcomed by the deceived, even in points where their greatest interest is not to be deceived. Some are even so attached to their leaders in error, that  
any

any offer to deliver them from it, would receive no better thanks than those of the bear, who, on your taking the ring from his nose by which he is led, tears you to pieces for it.

But surely of all the ways of frustrating the representations of truth, none can be more effectual than to suppose them to come from so infected a quarter as that of one party, merely in opposition to another, where perhaps sounder judgment, and exact candor lead to an equal contempt of both.

Yet however, Sir, you may have mistaken the person on whom you fasten the imputation of that letter, you have thought fit to answer on the foot of that supposition ; I own myself not a little obliged to you, for the opportunity of explaining my thoughts particularly on two points you mention.

The first, (page 12) relating to a board of enquiry on an officer, " who was judged, condemned, and ruined without any other trial." On which I shall only

say, that it seems to me impossible for you to have a worse opinion of that procedure than it deserves, let who will have been the promoter of it : and that this I well remember, that if there was any doubt, and I believe there was very little, of that gentleman's innocence, before he was *in that manner* condemned ; there was none at all of it afterwards, no more than about the reason for which he was so.

The second, " as to the decency and " humanity of ridiculing a bed-ridden minister, &c." (p. 61) I can safely say, that not the warmest of his friends, nor the most implicit of his cluster of adherents, could more detest the nature of such an illiberal personality, than did many of those who had never over-admired him either as a patriot, a statesman, no nor even as an orator, nor saw any thing in him above a very common man, to whom certain strange conjunctures in these ridiculous times, had given a popularity, by which he had more than once been hoisted into power, after more than once giving as plain proofs as could be wished, of how much he deserved the one, and was qualified

qualified for the other. If in this opinion, however, they were in the wrong, purely for want of better judgment, even you yourself can only pity them.

But surely, Sir, it does not at all follow, that from one's thinking one person unequal to the taking charge of the British system, one should think another more fit for it, to whom, perhaps, even greater and juster exceptions might be made ; and much less others, of whom a long and sad experience has pretty well settled the rate of opinion, and who nevertheless are probably still the predominant party at bottom.

The truth is, that in the mention of those party-cabals to which you allude, (p. 61.) I sincerely meant no preference of any, but an exclusion of them *all* : in the opinion, which you are most heartily welcome to treat with what contempt you please ; that from none of them this country can very rationally hope its retrieval out of its present state of perdition. But explode this opinion as you may, at least you cannot but acquit it of flattery  
to



to present power, or even to *future*, when I ingenuously add, that I have no particular substitutes in view ; only, I presume in general, that this great nation cannot be so absolutely destitute of neutrals of birth, rank, influence and abilities, as not to afford a competent and a less exceptionable choice amongst them : at least, it will be one great merit, not to have been servilely enrolled in any party.

To one then fixed in a just contempt of *all* parties whatever, you will easily imagine that the treating him in quality of even the head of one, could not be a very acceptable compliment. As little would the concomitant title of right honorable, flatter one who knows so well to what sort of personages it is now so often given, as if with design to degrade it. That Englishman, whatever his condition may be, who sincerely and disinterestedly loves his country, is a character so much higher, by the heart at least, than those who dishonour or disserve it ; and is in these days so great a distinction, that he must have a wretched taste, indeed, who would envy them a worthlessness, that is no distinction.

tion at all, unless a scandalous one in proportion to the exaltedness of the stations in which it is found. If this preamble should appear impertinent to others, at least it cannot so to you, whose mistake has made it necessary ; and I now proceed to what my title-page promised, some further and supplemental considerations, occasioned by the publication of the proceedings of the court-martial.

The first point to be noticed, since it was the only one left unexamined by the board of enquiry, is the reason of Fort-Fouras being inaccessible to sea-ward, after so explicit a declaration as that of the pilot Thierry, that *he* could *carry* the Magnanime within half an English mile of it. It was then but natural to suppose, that since nothing was attempted against it, the pilot must have out-promised his power to perform ; for which Sir Edward Hawke accounts very naturally in a part of his examination, that may very well, considering its consequence, admit a quotation here. (Page of the Proc. 108 and 109.)

“ On

“ On a proposal of laying a ship to  
 “ batter Fouras, the pilot of the Magna-  
 “ nime was examined to the place and  
 “ depth of water near it : elated with the  
 “ success of the 23d (again Aix) and fond  
 “ of the Magnanime, he said, at first, be-  
 “ fore captain Mordaunt, *he* would *carry*  
 “ *her in* and *destroy* the fort. As the de-  
 “ ponent (Sir E. H.) had attentively con-  
 “ sidered the shore, and was sensible that  
 “ the *Magnanime*, which drew more water  
 “ than some of our three-deck’d ships,  
 “ could not be brought *near* enough to  
 “ batter the fort, he gave the pilot’s *gasco-*  
 “ *nade* time to subside, and then asked him  
 “ if he could carry a sixty-gun ship in  
 “ against it : he answered, her metal was  
 “ not weighty enough, as there were twen-  
 “ ty-four pounders in the fort. He then  
 “ proposed to him to lighten the *Barfleur*  
 “ two feet (this second conversation was  
 “ upon quarter-deck, by the intervention  
 “ of a man well versed in such *French* as  
 “ those kind of people speak.) The pi-  
 “ lot seemed *some time* satisfied with this,  
 “ and in consequence the deponent (Sir E.  
 “ H.) prepared an order to vice-admiral  
 “ Knowles

" Knowles to lighten the Barfleur ; and in  
 " the mean time gave him a verbal order,  
 " who immediately went away to give  
 " the necessary directions, and to enquire  
 " into the practicability of the attempt.—  
 " The pilot, now *recollected* himself, and  
 " declared that the Barfleur, *even thus*  
 " *lightened*, could not be brought *near*  
 " *enough* : that where she should come  
 " *nearest* at the top of high-water, on the  
 " ebb she must sink in the mud six feet  
 " or more, from which *he could not an-*  
 " *swer* whether she would *rise*. Upon  
 " *trial* afterwards, the *pilot* could not carry  
 " a *bombketch* within *random-shot* of the  
 " fort, as Mr. Knowles informed him, in  
 " whom, as being the second sea-officer  
 " in command, he apprehends he might  
 " safely confide for that information."

He, Sir E. H. added, (p. 10.) that this  
 same pilot, " upon examination at the  
 " council, appeared to be *very ignorant*  
 " of the *place*, and even at the attack of  
 " the fort of Aix he observes, that the  
 " *Magnaume* sewed in the mud, though  
 " *Thierry* was on board."

C

Thus

Thus is the non-attack of *Fouras* by sea solved in the very manner, which it was so obvious to bespeak it would : and as to the French seventy-four gun-ship running up the Charente, on which you lay such a stress, there is hardly a foremastman in the navy, but what can give a very satisfactory reason why she could not be followed, even if the subsequent one would not do ; that there was not a single pilot on board the fleet that would take charge of a twenty gun-ship in the chase up it. Page 84, of the proceedings you will see this point as fully explained, as the greatest punctiliousness of examination could require.

You will also see (from page 81, *proc.*) the question minutely answered, “ why “ the fleet did not come into the road “ sooner than the 23d, seeing they made “ the coast on the 20th ? ” Concerning which, whatever your private opinion may be of vice-admiral Kn——, in general, which you are certainly as free to entertain as possible ; yet is it plain, that in this particular you have done him wrong,  
as

as well as Sir E. H. who, if either the fact or reasoning, on which you proceed, was true, must have been the compleatest driveller on earth, to have suffered his subaltern's management, or opinion, to have had any share in defeating so great a project as that, of which the maritime part of the execution was committed to himself, or to his choice of whom to trust in any branch of it. Did Sir E. H. complain of Mr. Kn---- ? and if he did not, who can, without beginning at Sir Edward ? whom even malice itself, never that I could yet learn, charged with being either coward or fool.

The procedure of the court-martial having then cleared up the only point that had been left dubious, the practicability of attacking Fouras by sea, all the other parts of it will fall so properly within the course of my reply to your several objections, that there will be no occasion for a separate discussion. And as to the unanimous and honorable acquittal of Sir John by a numerous Commission of officers appointed to try him, however natural it might be to challenge

a strong presumption from thence in his favor, I entirely wave that advantage, from a consciousness, that as their condemnation of him would not in the least have changed my opinion, founded as it was, on matters of fact and evidence; neither could his acquittal add to that most perfect certainty of his innocence, they had before established: a certainty that had not the least connection with my knowing there was such a person in the world, as the projector or patron of the expedition.

If that acquittal, however, should be unpopular, or, if there are still some, as in favour of that common sense, of which you so often, and so pathetically invoke the name, I hope there cannot be many, who can harbour the least doubt of Sir John's having fully done his duty; there is one reflection which cannot fail of comforting him. A false judgment can only "*disbonor*" those who make it, or those who are weak enough to be misled by it, without examination: nothing being so rash as the decisions of the ignorant, nor nothing so hard as to engage

engage them to retract them. Who does not every day see men persevere in an error, as if that was the best expedient to cover the shame of having been in one, or preferable to the glory which the wise always find in renouncing it, from a consciousness that, being but men, fallibility could not be half the reproach to them, that obstinacy must be?

But whoever condemns, or acquits him, most certainly there is no man in Britain, who ought to confess himself so deeply obliged to that commander, as the patron of the expedition himself, if he has a grain of that gratitude, with which it would be very unfair to suppose him unprovided. He must himself rejoice, that such a number of his countrymen were not so fillily sacrificed to an opinion of his, perhaps too lightly taken up; and which, himself being persuaded, he could hardly fail of persuading others to adopt, supported as it was by the irresistible powers of his oratory. But had the nation sustained so deep a loss, as was palpably prepared for it, and to so little purpose, even a sentiment of just compassion



passion would then probably have disposed many minds to examine into the nature and practicability of the project itself: minds now averse to that examination, from the excuse of doubt left them by the non-execution; a doubt, of which the partizans of the scheme do not fail to avail themselves, with those upon whom it can pass for one. Though, so tenacious of its object is the rage of prejudice, that had Sir John even been cut off, one half of his troops knocked on the head, and the other taken prisoners of war, which, or something like it, must in all human probability have been the case, I do not doubt but there would still have remained some, who would have kept on trumpeting the excellence of the plan, and have discovered in the execution that cause of its miscarriage, which your favorite, common sense, would have never thought of looking for, but in the project itself.

You produce, Sir, with great emphasis (page 10) the names of his M---, and the Privy-council, in support of the plan, against those who took the liberty of treating

treating it from the first, as a wild, chimerical, and absurd one. I know not what impressions they *may* make on you, but I readily suppose them such as they would make on every man of sense; impressions of the highest respect and veneration. But, I own, I think there is still an authority superior to theirs, in points where judgment and not obedience is concerned, and superior, because derived from God himself, and that is, one's own reason. The names of King and Council, at the same time they justly command the most submissive regard, do not challenge the attribute of infallibility, which even the Roman-Catholics begin to be heartily sick of allowing to their Popes. So far from it, they are often themselves most graciously pleased to lay before the Public, their motives and course of procedure, leaving every free Englishman to judge of them for himself. You, Sir, for example, are perfectly at liberty to think the intelligence that determined the resolution of the expedition, an admirable and compleat one. But will you grudge others the same liberty of thinking the contrary?

Others,

Others, with as good intentions to their country as yourself, though perhaps not with eyes so penetrating, might very innocently see nothing in it of particularity, or weight enough for the superstructure of such a plan upon it, as was offered and approved.

Of the memorial of the French forces I have already spoke in my first letter : you will hardly find in it such an absurdity as that of a private authority disputing preference with a public, in which I only mentioned the difference between the list furnished to the Council, and the common report and notion, under appeal to the reader's own judgment, which comes nearest to probability. Though, had the government even been egregiously in this matter imposed on by false accounts, it would not certainly have been the first time of its being so; and as to the pilot Thierri's deposition, I do not even take the advantage of its having proved a false one, because that could not be well foreknown; but by what appears of it previous to the resolution, however tolerable an one it may be from so very ignorant

*rant a person*, it seems rather too vague and inconclusive to have deserved the *whole* of that important resolution being rested upon it; I say, the *whole*, for the intelligence furnished by Col. Cl-- may be pronounced precisely less than nothing, even taking into the account *all* that he *said* before the council of war, the board of enquiry, and the court-martial, put together. Can you, Sir, say that he ever so much as pretended to have personally explored the great and important point of all, the accessibility of Rochefort by sea, or to ascertain many other essentials necessary to be known, before the plan of attacking it could be so much as attempted to be carried into execution? Yourself only affect to be arch upon the doubt of there being a ditch quite round the place or not, and to take it ill that the troops did not march up to see whether Rochfort could be escaladed or not, where, N. B. IF it was not, there was no artillery that could give a chance to force it, or to oppose to that of the place. But, deign to ask yourself the question, was any thing known that ought indispensably to

D

have

have been known, preliminary to such a measure as that of attacking Rochefort? and the answer of your own knowledge and judgment to that question, can hardly, if you will suffer your prejudice to give them fair play, be other than favorable to the resolution of not risking so fine a body of troops, on such light and defective information?

If a French officer should report to his court, that Newport on the Isle of Wight was an unfortified place, that a hundred or less regulars might carry by a coup-de-main; what would he in that say, that was not strictly true? And yet I fancy, that they would think twice before they attempted it with ten thousand men, could they even procure a pilot through the Needles, and had they nothing to dread from the superiority of our naval force; especially where the case of a surprize should be out of the question, as it was with respect to Rochefort. The place itself forms the least object; its relations and connections, such as the means of coming at it, of retreating in case of a repulse, and the probability of succours by the

the national force, being the capital points to be previously ascertained beyond a doubt ; nothing of which was in this case so much as pretended to be known. Or surely, sixteen ships of the line needed not to have been employed, in convoying transports upon an expedition, where even a bomb-ketch could not come within gun-shot of the forts at the mouth of the river. The city-barges, as somebody before me has humorously observed, might certainly have been at least as serviceable : even frigates could not cover the debarkation, at the only spot where it could take place. It is indeed said, in a quotation of your's from the Report, (p. 41.) " that " the bomb-ketches might *annoy* the " troops, if there were any behind the " sand-hills." Perhaps they might ; not much, however, I fancy. But as to bomb-ketches covering a debarkation, I have no great conception of its being possible for them to be employed on such a service, but that may very well be owing to my ignorance of the military art ; and to the same ignorance do I impute my doubt about a couple of field pieces blowing up a sluice in half an hour, by which

the ditch was to vanish, (p. 54.) and can hardly yet believe, that the success of the expedition depended on so simple an operation.

You have asked, sir, some questions in the name of common sense ; permit me now to ask you one in the name of common candor. What could possibly be your drift in introducing two such *stories*, as that of the Marshal Seneclerres being worn out with infirmities, and crying like a child, according to *your* French accounts ; and in that of its being understood on the coast, that both Rochefort and Rochelle would, in the course of a few days, fall into the hands of the English ; there being no possibility to reinforce them till the household-troops could arrive from Versailles, (postscript.) Is it possible, sir, that you can have seriously swallowed such gross illusions, or can hope to pass them, unless on the profoundest ignorance, or the most indolent acquiescence of non-examination ?

As to the Marshal, that he might be very infirm, even to the dotage of shedding tears

tears there is nothing incredible in that :  
 the great duke of Marlborough himself,  
 was precisely in that condition before he  
 died. Nay, I grant it even possible, tho'  
 assuredly barely so, that the court of France  
 might be so ill-informed of this his dis-  
 qualification, as to have trusted him with  
 so important a command as that of the  
 coast, in so critical a conjuncture as this of  
 a threatened, and of what you would  
 have to be considered as a very formidable,  
 invasion. But is it to be believed, that  
 since you allow there was a Marshal of  
 France in or near Rochefort, that he had  
 not officers and troops with him sufficient  
 to conduct for him the necessary opera-  
 tions, and at least to put Rochefort into  
 a posture of defence against a coup-de-  
 main, which could not, if you believe co-  
 lonel Cl-----, (you see I quote no unfav-  
 ourable witness to you) take place, but  
 by a sudden surprize ? All possibility of  
 which being long enough over, any other  
 method of attack was out of the question,  
 since there was confessedly no artillery pre-  
 pared ; and without it, our army must have  
 made before it as silly a figure as a cock-pit  
 without his gaffles. That such accounts  
 then



then you might have, I do not doubt : there are as silly ones every day imported ; but surely nothing would equal the absurdity of grounding upon the like of these a plan of enterprize, except that of condemning on them the non-execution of one. As to any awe or terror to be struck by the mere name of a Marshal of France, I heartily agree with you, that nothing could be more ridiculous or shameful. We have had a Marshal, nay, a king of France in our prisons before now, and may again, but it must not be by such projections as you are pleased to defend, nor by such a spirit of party as now reigns, instead of the old British one, which seems so thoroughly extinguished.

Now as to the taking of Rochefort and Rochelle being given over by the French, as already in our possession, on the bare appearance of our armament, as you advance on the authority of a captain or master of a transport vessel ; not denying the existence of this curious piece of intelligence, let us examine the merit of it, and leave the pronouncing on it to every Englishman, who shall *dare* to make use of his own judgment and knowledge.

First, as to Rochefort, the practicability of the attempt without knowing *how* it lay, how to be come at, without artillery, without security of a retreat, without, in short, only every thing that was material to be known, has already been discussed.

But as to *Rochelle*, surely no falsity was ever more grossly palpable. There is hardly a man who knows any thing, but knows that this place, the last important fortress of liberty, and the Protestant religion in France, is so extremely well fortified by art and nature, that an army, by sea and land, of fifty or sixty thousand men, might *perhaps* promise to itself the reduction of it in the course of a campaign, if not in mean time relieved by the whole force of France. To believe then that they could tremble for such a place, where especially surprising it towards the sea, is from its situation impossible; and where the case of a surprize itself did not exist, is such a stretch of credulity, that one would hardly imagine there was a man capable of even feigning it. It may also here be observed, that strong as it was before, it received within these

these few years, a very considerable addition to its works, which cannot be unknown here, since it was in all the foreign gazettes.

As to the household-troops being ordered to hold themselves ready to march at a minute's warning, can any one from thence draw an inference of our armament having been an object of terror? Was such a disposition other than what might naturally be expected? Were a descent on the point of being made on any part of our coasts by the French, would not any forces at London have the same order, to be ready at all events, even if the coast was ever so well guarded? Must not then one be reduced to the most pitiful shift for argument, to infer from that disposition of the household troops, the French being frightened out of their senses?

In the mean time, it is precisely by such silly stories and idle reports as these, that many well-meaning, worthy people in the nation, are mis-led and abused; I mean those who are not in a way or condition

condition to examine for themselves. Thus it is, that many with the best of hearts towards their country, and even from that very goodness of heart, have been betrayed into the countenancing men and measures which, had the truth of things been known to them, they would have been the first to disapprove. But to whatever deception they may be liable, from any designing men or parties, they can never suspect it in those, who desire nothing so much of them, as that they would not trust any other's judgment or knowledge but their own, especially in points where it is so easy for themselves to obtain sufficient information. Many would not want more than would constitute them, if not consummate politicians, at least competent judges in matters, of which almost any Englishman should be ashamed to be thought ignorant, or blindly to pin his faith about them on others. Yet, as things stand, how few dare think for themselves? They are content with having their opinions ready chewed for them, as we are told of the Negus of Abyssinia, having his royal food chewed by an old woman,

E and

and chucked down his throat. With respect to certain personages, as well as to certain measures, how could the preferment and popularity of the one, or any approbation of the other be otherwise accounted for?

As to France again, what gross absurdities, what palpable falsities and even often contradictory ones, are not every day swallowed; if they but flatter either the popular humor, or favor any particular point of interest of designing men? Few seem to consider how pernicious such national mistakes are, or how indispensable a preliminary to the taking of just measures for reducing an enemy: it is to know his exact state of strength, as well as his weak side. The next point is, on that knowledge, neither to dread him so much as to let fear enervate councils or operations, nor to despise him so much as to let that contempt lead into false measures. Has this maxim, true as it is, trite, ever been observed towards France? Let the public measures declare. Sometimes we are panic-struck at scarce the shadow of a danger from it, other times knocking our heads against the hard impenetrable

penetrable substance of one. For my own part, I neither think her so formidable as some represent her, nor so despicable as others do, nor that she is to be subdued, no, not even by the great force in fashion, of whole regiments of tropes, battalions of metaphors, or brigades of similes, though the man that should be at the head of them, were *heaven-born*.

Yet, Sir, you tax me, and surely very unjustly (p. 28) with entertaining a high opinion of the French wisdom and ability, and extolling them highly on every occasion. I presume there is no part of what I wrote on this subject that breathes a thought so foreign to me. The most that I ventured to say, only supposed, they could not well be thought such rank idiots as to omit, in their own defence, what nothing but idiotism itself could neglect, and that our troops would probably have stood wretched a chance to have trusted to the possibility of such a neglect. For anything further, yourself cannot think worse than I know of them. They are constitutionally and systematically the incendiaries of Europe, and in short as great enemies to its liberty as to their own.

E2

Slaves

Slaves themselves, with sense enough inwardly to feel the shame of being so, and which a poorly palliated exposition, cannot conceal from them, they think, however, to cover that shame by propagating their system of slavery, wherever their arms, cunning, or perfidy can pave their way for subdual or influence. Their chains they affect to cover with the flowers of eloquence, or with the laurels of war, or jingle them harmoniously, as if they were vain of them. From the whole drift of their politics, they have made it the interest of every nation in Europe, to contribute to their reduction: and yet, by their management and intrigues, at almost all the courts of it, they have easily prevailed over such ministers as we opposed to them, and given the foulest cause imaginable, a face painted with fair colours. The war now on foot was undoubtedly premeditated, at the very instant they were signing the peace with us at Aix-la-Chapelle; that peace in which we so tamely consented to give hostages! and as to their great wisdom it capitally consists in our folly. They have erected their system on the basis of our actual blunders, or the presumption of them,

them, from their knowledge of us, in which, to give us our due, we have seldom deceived their most sanguine expectations. Their military, its true, is more numerous than ours, which is not to be wondered at, under a constitution that is purely military, though their area of dominion is not proportionable to the force they keep up so much greater than ours, and certainly not so populous : The common men in their armies are very common men indeed ; and far inferior in every respect to ours. The great stress of their force in war consists in their nobility, which still adheres to its original principle of institution for military service, and which to that powerful point of honor joins a more regular education and training in war, than most of our officers. I have counted on their military establishment amongst their lieutenant-generals, *Marechaux de Camp*, *Brigadiers d'Armées*, *de Cavalerie*, and *de Dragons*, 15 Princes, 31 Dukes, 193 Marquesses, 139 Earls or Counts, 10 Viscounts, 78 Barons and Knights, independent of the untitled nobility, and of those that may be presumed to be in the subaltern commands. The examples of men of such rank, doubtless  
diffuse



diffuse great animation through the whole body of the army; and surely the employment of these noblemen in the service of their country, may without partiality to the French, be pronounced at least equal to the glorious amusements of ours in racing, cock-fighting, gaming, and carrying themselves and their country to market, &c. And yet, to an Englishman, these titles need be far from dazzling or awful. The lowest freeman is superior to the highest slave in point of intrinsic dignity. The first subject in France is but the first slave, let his chains be never so gaudily ornamented ; and in that servile condition, there can never exist a true spirit, which is perhaps the reason they are forced to substitute a false one of honor they place in obeying a despotic master, and which should rather consist in spurning the yoke. To say then the truth, with all the advantages national liberty must give us over them, the greatest reproach that can be made to any administration is that of suffering the French to gain, or but to hope the least ascendant over us. Nor could that ever be the case, if the nation was once to feel its undoubted strength, or have it put into a

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prope

proper way of collecting and exerting itself to the purpose.

So much for my "extolling the wisdom and ability of the French." And now, Sir, give me leave to represent to you, your not having made the fairest use of the assertion you quote (P. 6.) of there having been those who pronounced boldly that nothing would or possibly could be done by that grand Armada; an anticipation you observe at once astonished mankind, and afforded a bad omen of the success; though it could certainly mean no more than an indifferent opinion of the projection, or perhaps of the projector himself. For to think that any private malevolence, pique or envy, could have prevailed on the commanders of the expedition to neglect so grossly their duty to their king, their country and themselves, and to commit therein a treason for which no protection could ensure their impunity, no reward in the power of a king to bestow, could compensate the infamy; *such a belief, I say, would itself* be such a stretch of injustice mixed with folly, as mankind at least can hardly be suspected of,

of, however a few individuals blinded by party-rage, or prejudice might adopt it.

But of all the charges you bring against me, the heaviest and certainly the most ill grounded, is, my want of candor, which would be infinitely the more criminal in me, for all my prefatory solemn professions of it. Had you deigned to peruse my discussion in a state of mind, free enough from prejudice, for truth not to find the entrance shut against it, you could not miss observing that I was far from seeking to derive unfair advantages from the testimony of the officers of the council of war (P. 23.) whom you very justly call parties, or from vague reports in opposition to those of authority. The whole strength of my conclusions are rested entirely on the information produced on your own side, but especially on the intelligence and deposition of Col. Cl— himself. You cannot reasonably suppose him to have been favorable or partial to the resolution of not attempting to proceed against Rochefort; and yet, what could more conduce to it, next to an immediate survey and consideration of circumstances on the spot, than the figure that gentleman himself made

made before the council of war of the 25th, if the minute of it was not partially or falsely taken, though it does not appear to have been contradicted : as follows (*Proceedings* p. 87.)

“ On examination of Col. Clerk, ALL  
 “ that could be gathered is, that the army  
 “ are to march up TO SEE if Rochefort  
 “ can be escaladed or not ; but that all  
 “ opening of trenches for carrying on of  
 “ a regular siege, were not in HIS plan of  
 “ attack.”

You will excuse, Sir, this repetition, on account of its importance, and which conveys not an unpleasant image of an army marching up an enemy's country to see, if an attack, upon the plan of a surprise, N. B. already long over, was practicable or not, in which last case, there was nothing for them, but to march back again, that is to say, if they could.

As to the virulence which you accuse me of a tendency to support against the M---n---r, in that you also greatly injure the meaning of my heart. I know the  
 F present

present state of parties too well, not to think him the most plausible, if not even intrinsically the best of the leaders of them, and from his popularity, deserved or not deserved, the most capable to serve his country, if he could act up to his professions. And since it is fatal to Britain, that some particular party must rule, in exclusion of a more national spirit, and of those who if they deserved to rule, would despise all parties whatever, and wish the nation fairly rid of them all, than which day it could never see a happier : since, I say, there seems no great likelihood of so desirable a change of system taking place, no doubt your admired m---n---r is as proper a one as any other head, or member of a party. Yes ! even though new linked with colleagues, he once affected sovereignly to despise, on the sole strength of which contempt, he rose to his present super-eminence, and whom he has however taken under his most gracious protection, at the hazard of his popularity, and of making no better a figure, considering the different color of the principles he boasts, than a new patch on an old thread-bare ducal mantle. But  
what

what were the terms of the treaty, of a political penitence on their side, which cannot however be entirely unsuspicious, or of relaxations from the rigor of patriotism on his, the course and tenor of affairs must decide, and has, in truth, already pretty clearly decided.

So far then from harbouring the least malevolence against him, utterly indifferent as it must be to him whether I do or not ; if he has not already all the talents that constitute the great minister, which I am far from denying, as he may surely have them all without my knowledge or assent, at least, I wish he had them all both for his country's sake, and his own.

I wish he may remember that though in this infamous age, the rarity of having clean hands, has made that a great merit which is purely a common duty, it is also not unessential to have a clear heart, a heart that will not suffer to fume up to the head, and cloud it, the arrogance of superior lights, the fondness of power, without the requisites to discharge its

functions, that narrow-spirited partiality which leads to the selecting of subjects for employment out of one's own little family, instead of the great store-house of the nation : a heart in short above all the little-nesses of the times.

I wish him the discernment necessary to nominate or recommend the greatest and ablest ministers to foreign courts ; fit to support the dignity and interests of the nation, in this most critical conjuncture, and likewise to select the properest and most useful subjects for his own assistance at home, the want of which attention was the very rock on which Alberroni split, whose head intoxicated with his strange sudden elevation, and vanity did not permit him to listen to advice.

May he for his own sake remember, and apply the two following maxims of the Cardinal de Retz, which will be found true in all times, because all times resemble one another, so far as the heart of man; which is always and every where the same at bottom, goes to form them. The first, " That no circumstance so  
" much

" much disgraces one who pretends to  
 " be a great man, as his not seizing ex-  
 " actly, or making the most of the de-  
 " cislve moment of his reputation, which  
 " is generally sacrificed to an over-eager-  
 " ness for making his fortune. And it  
 " is in that precisely he is commonly  
 " doubly deceived." The second. That  
 " the very shadow of a closet, the weak-  
 " nesses in which one cannot hinder, is dan-  
 " gerous to a man, whose principal force  
 " consists in his reputation with the  
 " public."

May he also be thoroughly assured that  
 many proposals which might with a toler-  
 able grace, or at least without much in-  
 decency be made by others, will with the  
 worst grace imaginable come from him, if  
 he has ever before violently opposed the  
 matter of them ! that will be for ever re-  
 membered against him, and the most in-  
 trepid assurance, on such occasions, will  
 be but the more hurtful to the conclusions  
 he would establish, as it will less operate  
 conviction, than provoke indignation. A  
 mind thus changed, is always supposed  
 to be so by respects of interest and power,  
 and



and not by the actual position of things. This inference may certainly sometimes be wrong, but men are ever less afraid of being unjust, than of being taken for bubbles.

In my present train of good wishes to him, I cannot omit wishing him a manly, nervous oratory, such as may rather bespeak a command of business, than a command of words. These never fail him who is a thorough master of the first. May he entertain a just contempt for all that rumor and false fire of declamation, so much in the nature of a mounted sky-rocket, that bursting with a bounce, scatters little artificial stars, whose glittering impression vanishes instantly into the ambient darkness. I wish him, in short, an eloquence rather of service than of parade.

This will show you, sir, that not the warmest of his well-wishers, wish him better, or indeed, so well as I do, unless sincerity should be esteemed more pernicious than the rankest flattery. Can any thing, for example, be more pregnant with injury

ry to him than what you say (p. 62.) that no man in England durst fill his office after him? I wave an insistence on the scorn and derision, which such a suggestion must naturally provoke in every man in England of rank, quality, or pretensions equal, and many must be superior to his, and shall only remark that another cause was assigned for that long vacancy, at least as probable as yours, which was, that none cared much for sitting after him in a place; his very getting into which proved at once the nature of the times, and of the qualifications for obtaining it, such as could not render it a very *great* object of ambition.

I come now to your mention of the *six weeks admiralty* (p. 62.) which I am extremely ready to grant you was at least as valuable a set, as that which succeeded them: though I then thought the nomination of some of them, the highest impolicy in the personage, who was supposed to have nominated them, as it appeared so bad an omen, and gave his enemies so fair an handle to impeach his disinterestedness, in his very first step into power. Some of them one would have thought too  
great

great men to accept such a subaltern part on his recommendation. I also admit the fact to be exactly as you state it, as to their designed reinforcements for America; but you will allow too that this, though very laudable attention, was nothing to the point I contended for, of taking Cape-Breton. For certainly that force could not be supposed sufficient, humanly speaking, to ensure success; and any force in the least, short of that, was nothing to Cape-Breton. If we know its importance, in the opinion of which, I am flattered with your agreeing with me; the French also know it. These are the French king's words, in a memorial of instructions, dated Versailles, April, 1751. "*La Colonie de l'Isle Royale quoiqu'une des moins etendues sous ma domination dans l'Amerique, est cependant une des plus importantes et par sa situation, et par le commerce qui s'y fait.*" \*

It is not then to be doubted but it will require a force to reduce it, in proportion

\* The colony of Cape-Breton, though one of the least extensive ones of my dominions in America, is nevertheless of the greatest importance, both for its situation and for the trade carried on there,

to

to the naturally to be supposed augmentation of its works and defence: but it is as certain that it cannot, or is not at least hitherto put into a condition of resisting such a force as it is in our power to bring against it. As to the reproach you mention, having been made to that branch of the ministry of their being *America-mad*, there was a retort at hand too obvious to be missed, which is, that it was at least better than being *Germany-mad*, and the worst I wish them, is that they may not be whiffled round nor fall off from the deserving the honor of such an attachment to that truly national object being imputed to them, as hardly admits of an excess.

As to several common-place aphorisms interspersed in your letter, the purport of which is that a soldiers life is not his own, but belongs to the state—that hard services ought not to be neglected because liable to loss, or danger, and the like: they are much too just to be disputed in general; all that I presume to deny of them, is their being in the least applicable to the present point.

G

But

But to the question you propose with a little air of triumph. (p. 34.) "Is a private officer or a collection of officers in council (for the number does not alter their condition) to say, my orders are ridiculous? who constituted them counsellors of state, and submitted the propriety of their orders of decision?" a particular answer is due in acquittal of the commanders of the heavy charge it implies against them,

In one word, sir, it was the KING, the king who made sir John specifically, and his council the judges of the propriety of their orders, which must be exactly in proportion to the practicability they should find or not of them, on that or any part of the coast, to which they were sent. And let any one but consider the defectiveness of the information, on which the plan was embraced, and it will hardly be denied that his majesty with great consideration and justice, left that latitude in his instructions. An express positive order of proceeding, at all events and risks, would have certainly born date with more propriety from a cell in a mad-house, than from

from a closet, which ought to be respected as the sanctuary of wisdom. If the commanders then, who must know on what intelligence and advice the plan was originally founded ; (however it came to be adopted by the highest authority) in the gall of their disappointment, at being sent on such an errand, had even taken the liberty to treat those orders not indeed as quite ridiculous, but only as better to have been spared for their being so impracticable, of which they were happily for this nation, and themselves left the judges ; there could not, methinks, have been any great harm in it, even though none of them were counsellors of state, or had not left a low post in the army in the aspiring views of becoming so, in the safer course of rising by parliamentary campaigns, or the wordy warfare of opposition.

Disdaining too all petty cavils, I wave what advantages might be drawn from *Port L' Orient* being suffered to stand in the instructions to the general, though that place was known to be unattackable, and it remaining uncanceled, was represented

mented as a hardship on the commander. (See Proceed. p. 61. and 106.) This it seems was over-ruled, though probably it would have been more exact, consequently more in the style of business, in an affair of so solemn and momentous a nature, to have complied with the motion for leaving it out. But let it go for a companion to the famous letter by the Viper-sloop.

Having now, Sir, gone through the points I thought most required an answer and purely to avoid too great a tediousness, passed by many, in which I am however far from acquiescing, I might here properly conclude this letter, and the same is in fact concluded as to its principal object, the expedition. But my gratitude for the pleasure you gave me (p. 64.) to find there is one man at least in Britain whose heart is, or seems to be susceptible of tender feelings. "For the distress and "disgrace of this country," continues the pen in my hand, whether I will or not. I cannot quit it, (though you may this letter, if you are tired with it) without stating my sentiments of the cause of that disorder

order you lament, and of the only glimpse of chance for a cure that appears to me. For I am not thoroughly satisfied, but that where past indolence may have invited that perdition, we have long seen jogging on towards us, a mis-governed wrong-headed activity must bring it on upon the spur.

If to bad heads or bad hearts, or to a complication of both, for they are seldom seen entirely separate, our present wretched state may justly be imputed, the too too rational despair of our emergence out of it, is owing to, if possible, yet a worse cause, that prodigious insensibility of the nation, to its greatest and most sacred interests, that so deplorably lie a bleeding.

So stupid, so even treasonable an unconcern, one would however be tempted to think incredible, if to, what every day passes before our eyes, the whole stream of history did not join its force of demonstration. Search all its records and you will hardly find a single instance of the fall, especially, of a free state, that was  
not



not precisely owing to the gross indolence of those very persons who had the greatest interest in its preservation and prosperity : who yet were wanting to their country, wanting to themselves, in not taking effectual and timely measures against the pernicious designs of their foreign enemies, or to stop the ruinous career of domestic ones.

This torpor of the mind it is, which whether brought on by corruption, or bred and nursed by effeminating luxury, or by a mixture of both, gives the reason, and marks the epoch of the declension of so many of those states, of which there now remains nothing but the empty sound of a name. Rome, Carthage, Athens, ultimately perished from no other cause than the supine acquiescence of the bulk of their respective communities, in the follies, passions and vices of their leading men.

If we turn our eyes on the prospect offered us, by our country, nothing is easier to trace, than the present ruinous state of things, to the same original cause. It is but

but too visible an one ; the extream negligence of those whose honor, interest and safety demanded so contrary a conduct. Who yet contented themselves with remaining passive spectators of this long series of blunders and impolicy, of which not to have foreseen the consequences such as they are; must be as great a reproach to their understandings, as their not joining to prevent them, must be to their spirit, or to their sense of duty to their country and to themselves.

But what renders such an indolence yet more inexcusable, is the egregious worthlessness of the adversaries those would have had to encounter, who, clear of all party-spirit, should have united purely on the principles of preserving and defending their country.

These adversaries may be divided into two classes, which, however, occasionally different, may be pronounced exactly the same at bottom.

The first, such as were in the actual possession of power, and who, whether  
through

through incapacity of better judgment, or through that corrupt,] and always disloyal concurrence to unnational measures, which might be prescribed to them as the sole tenure of their offices, sacrificed their country so much in vain to another, whose evidently greatest interest was, that it should not be sacrificed to it.

In the second, and surely not the much more respectable class of the two, might be ranked those, who being out of power, were not ashamed in their eagerness to get into it, of profaning the sacred term of patriotism, and of pressing it into the service of dirty self-interest, or private ambition. Such, however, is the force of that word, or of its equivalents, that even the frequency of the detection of their being no more than empty sounds, or the hackneyed language of pretext and selfishness, has not been able to stale their effect, or to rob them of the popularity annexed to the employ of them. These terms of art then, for such they literally were, under favor of a smock of zeal, and of petulant invective tragically declaimed, passing for all that is great and  
pro-

profound in oratory, and appearing to be attacks on the fortress of power, masked the oblique lines of approach, that were to produce the opening the gates to these mock-besiegers. But whether the admission of them was voluntary, or forced by conjunctures, or by the besieged being tired with the galling of their fire, certain it is that the nation was not one jot the better for their success, or for its having lent its name to their attack: for either very congenially and kindly incorporating with the old garrison, or rather relieving than disarming it; their country saw and felt, that whatever change there might be of men, there was none of maxims or measures, at least, for the better; and the truth is, that by those who knew them best, no better was or could be expected.

Certainly then, there never was any thing so formidable in those, or in all parties whatever, separated or united, as to deter those Englishmen yet uninfected with their corruption, folly or falsity, from interposing in behalf of their country against the fatal effects of them. Their nonsense could not be supposed to be the

H

common

common nonsense of the nation ; and not being so, how easy would it be to kindle up a spirit ; and what spirit ? not that of a further schism, but of a cordial union of all true well-wishers to their country, against all who should oppose the rescue of it out of its present growing distress. What could withstand such a cause, pursued with the zeal it deserves with all the laws of God and man on its side ? laws, of which even that great one of self-preservation, is not the greatest, since that of restoring the national honor stands included in the attempt.

Circumstanced as things are, can there be any so blind as not to see the necessity of this noble and virtuous union, or seeing it, such traitors to their country and to their own interests ; or so abandoned to sloth and indolence, as not instantly to concur to the promotion of it ?

On such an union taking place we should see the public measures replaced on a national basis, and all the lines of deliberation and execution drawn to their long-forgotten centre, the true good of this

this country ; and those alone would be considered as enemies to it who should set their faces to obstruct it. They, it would be, that would themselves be treated as visionaries, who should know so little of the true British spirit, as to suppose it, especially when thus roused as it must now be, incapable of producing such a salutary union.

Compared to which, when comprehending as it would do, the whole power and activity of the community, how petty, and how contemptible must appear all the selfish cabals of particular families or factions, who in their rage of engrossing that power to which they are so unequal, think it an injury done to them, if instead of serving their country, their country is not suffered to serve them.

Neither would the opposition, that such as they could make to that political regeneration, which would reduce them to their original nothingness of power as well as of character, deserve the name of an opposition. It could, at most, pass for a madness, that would justify the tying their

hands up from doing further mischief to the nation and themselves. Their struggles would be even a jest, instead of a discouragement, to such as, in the strength of such a cause, would resolutely undertake them. For, in fact, what are all the proofs they have hitherto attempted to give of ability or vigor, been, but matter of pity and ridicule, when considered with an eye of the least penetration or discernment? Contempt is, however, undoubtedly their due, and that is a debt as easy as it is just to pay them. For, in fact, what fear can there be of mistaking as to them, or of danger from them, unless of not despising them as much as they deserve? Even in the case of any prevalence of theirs against their opponents, the scorn of them could only be increased by the reflexion of the indignity of such a prevalence. Hard indeed would it be, if such as could never make any use of the power intrusted with them by their country, to the least hurt of its enemies, should be only armed with it effectually against its friends ; and of being friends to this country, there can scarce exist a stronger

stronger proof than the wishing it out of their power to do it farther harm ; nor is this wish even an unfriendly one to themselves, since their own private interest, in the common fate of the nation, is manifestly included in it.

It is not, however, from those who are congenially satisfied with the present course of things, from their hopes or views to come into play on the foot of that complaisance, or acquiescence, that the nation can expect its redemption. From these, if they were but honest enough to speak out, one might anticipate an answer, something in the spirit of that given by one of the great men of Java, to those who were urging him to join in suppressing a band of robbers (with whom, by the bye, he used to share the plunder), as a measure essential to the good of his country ; “ *Tell them so,*” said the great man, frankly, “ *who have the good of their country at heart ; for may I perish if I have.*”

As little good may be expected from those whose constitutional sloth, or, with  
leave



leave for the expression, whose innate *vis inertiae* is proof against all the motives of honor; or even of what one would imagine dearer to them, self-preservation; yet, if it might not too much shock these men of ease, to urge to them any thing of so rough a nature as Reason, against the grain of velvet-indolence, they might, in favor even of that supreme good of theirs, Ease, be reminded, that its being lost and destroyed, in the consequences of a general wreck, is far from being impossible.

This epidemic indolence, however, it is, which is not only an enemy to action, but tends to propagate a general and fatal blindness, in matters of the highest concern, to every individual of the nation. It begets, in those infected with it, an aversion to thought, as an invader of their quiet, especially when they have a sort of confused pre-notion, through the powerful instinct of truth, that the result of an examination will not be agreeable to their favorite prejudices. Prejudices that shall have been infused into them by such as had an interest to mislead them by false lights, or rather to keep them in utter dark-

darkness. In this, their mis-leaders are greatly favored by the nature of indolence itself ; it being natural for those inclined to sleep, and to those who would lull them to it, so shut out their common disturber, the light of truth. Thence too, the so frequent administration of political opiates, which increase the disease, whilst they stupify the sense of it, and dose the patient into perdition.

But, if from characters of this lethargic turn the nation has little succor to hope, in times, when the utmost vigilance and activity could not be too much against that alert enemy at our gates, whose motions will be only quickened by our slowness; neither can there a much greater dependence be reasonably had on those whose little heads are so engrossed by trifles, as to have no room left in them for any thing that is great, noble, or spirited.

Many of these however deserve great pity; they are what they are, constitutionally. It would perhaps be even cruel, to rob them of that taste of theirs for every thing that is futile and silly, since nature has made them

them capable of nothing else. Take from numbers of them their joy, and plume of pride in a tawdry equipage; their race-horses, dogs and flatterers; their keenness of composition for who shall be king of the butterflies on a birth-day, and other the like fablime points of their delight or occupation; what would you leave them, but a dreadful voice of existence there would be no filling up? organized as their heads are for the reception of nothing but refuse-trash, whilst their hearts are too rotten-soft for receiving and retaining the fair impressions of virtue or honor.

But even these, if they could be brought to a sense of their truest interest, would, for their own sakes, for the sake, in short, of preserving that property which enables them to indulge themselves in all their insipid rote of dissipation, and furnishes them the materials of parade with which their most miserable vanity is so humbly satisfied; yes! even these ought to wish for such a change of system, as might allow of some hopes of averting the storm that threatens to involve them all in the general ruin.

This

This consideration too, one would think, might give an alarm even to a certain veteran camp, where there has been long hung out a flag of defiance to the common sense of mankind; and where it is impossible to decide which prevails most, the spirit of rapine, or the infection of dulness. There it is, that nonsense and folly receive as a favor, what sense and taste would spurn, if proffered; an admission into clubs, which requires at least as much interest to obtain, as a seat in the senate. In that rookery, it is that, the greatest and most sacred interests of the nation have often been regulated over a card-table, or a dice-box, or at best, in the intervals, snatched with regret from the only serious occupation there, that of unmercifully pillaging one another. And, to say the truth, the face of affairs did not bely the nature of the time allotted to them, the manner of their digestion, nor the place whence they had dated. Even, at this day perhaps, that receptacle of gamesters and statesmen outvies the present m—t—r—l closet in point of extensive influence and solidity of power, though to do it justice, it has not

yet indeed produced any thing equal to the Secret Expedition.

Those then, who yet retain a claim to the name of Englishmen, a name once never associated but with the ideas of the highest honor, of courage, of spirit, and and in short of every thing that is great and estimable amongst mankind, never could desire an occasion more worthy of a just and virtuous ambition, than the present one of stepping forth ; and, before it is too late, effectually taking in hand, the cause of this much injured and long deserted country. Who should defend it, if they betray or fail it ? or where is there in the known world, that country so well worth defending as this ? let them consider too, that there is nothing of an affectation of gloominess or exaggeration in painting the prospect of ruin, as imminent and inevitable, unless averted by immediate counter-action and negotiations. There plainly appears but one alternative ; that of a bloody war, or of an ignominious ruinous peace. Between these two courses, there is no middle one ; and it is not hard to decide, for which of them it is, that a true Englishman

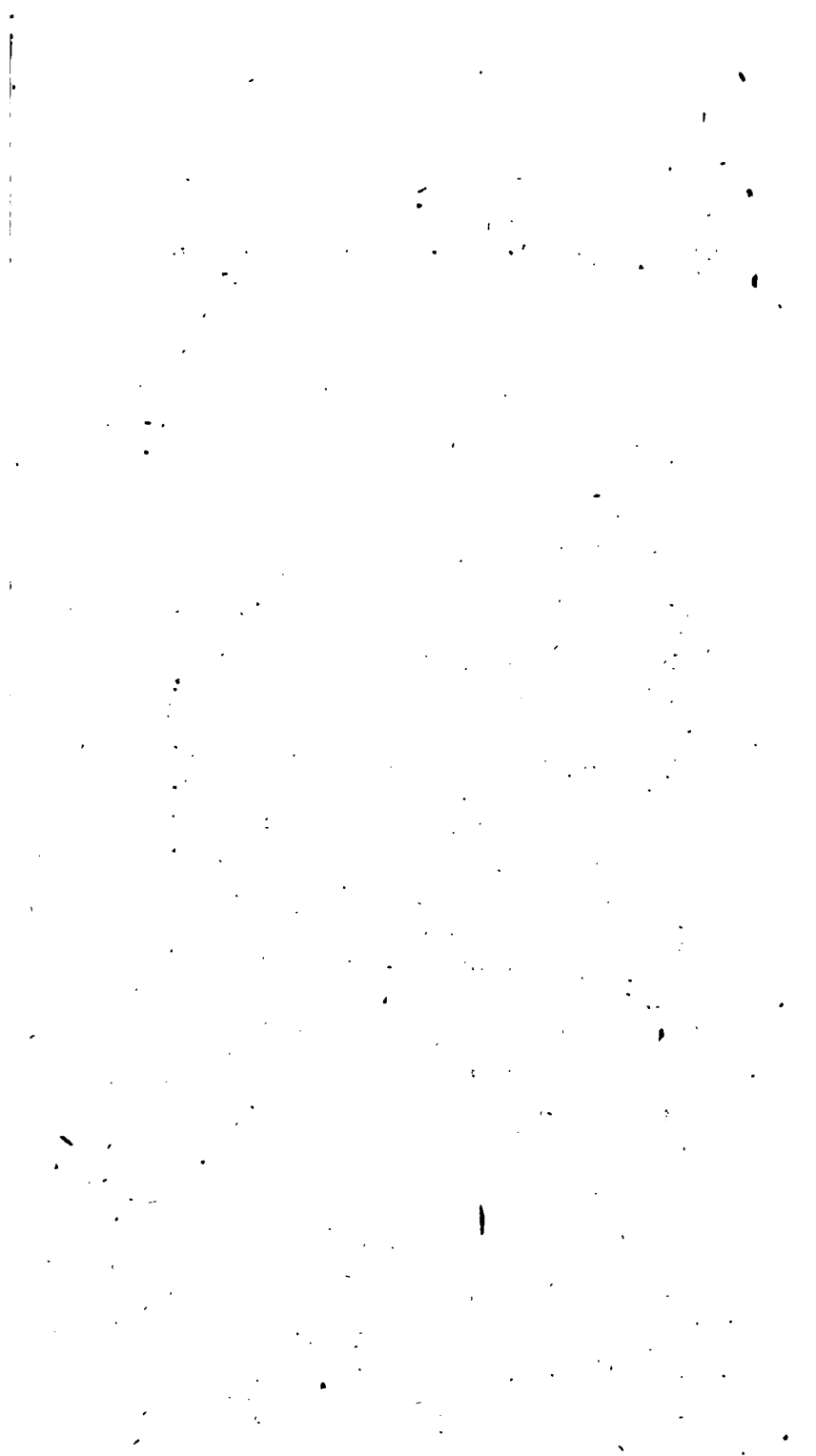
man will declare. It will also not appear a proposition very difficult to grant, that for the British Genius to soar once more to its antient heighth, it must first be freed from all those fetters of foreign interests, corruption, folly, and futility, that have so long kept it chained down groveling in the dirt. Not forgetting withal, that if inaction must be granted highly pernicious, it can, however, hardly be more so, than an unadvised, or misdirected activity.

Here, Sir, I conclude, and if there is any part of the foregoing has offended you, or can offend any one in the character of a true Englishman, I am heartily sorry for it, sorry for myself: nothing could be less my intention. As to those whom partial attachment, weak prejudice, or the strong byas of interest, subject to an invincible prepossession; it is for themselves that I am sorry; and especially, for so far as this country may, or must be affected by their error.

*I am,*

*S I R,*

*Yours, &c.*



# APPENDIX,

I N

A N S W E R

T O T H E

Monitor of the 21st January, 1758.

**T**H E not having seen the Monitor till the foregoing sheets were finished and sent to the press, hindered my including in them my answer to it. On perusal of it, however, I judged this appendix, the more necessary for the good opinion in which that paper deservedly stands with the public. The spirit that animates it, is so palpably that of justice to this country, that I cannot but respect it, even where it may be, I do not say actually is, in an error. But, however different our sentiments may be in this or any other point, I defy him to wish the cause he has undertaken to defend



send more success than I do, if the justice of it deserves it, and I hope he would not himself wish it on any other footing.

That the report of the board of enquiry was ineffectual, I entirely agree with him. If he even understands it, or can but guess at its drift or meaning, it is more than I pretend to do. The most I could make of it was, that it was something in the nature of the *special verdict* of a petty-jury, that leaves the matter of the indictment to the decision of the judges.

As to the unanimous acquittal passed by the court martial, which makes the great object of the Monitor's complaint, that the commanders of the expedition were not delivered up to a *public execution*, for not less do the motto and tenor of that paper import; I own, after perusing the proceedings of that court, with the utmost attention, that I do not see what other sentence could pass, unless the members of it could have thought the sacrifice of the lives of those gentlemen, a compliment due to the wisdom of the minister, a sacrifice of which they deserved the

the less to be the victims, for their having spared to this country, so vain an one, as that would have been of its troops intrusted to their conduct. Or was nothing but their blood to atone for their having trusted their own senses, in defiance of what the admirers of the projection of the plan might think or say, and for having obeyed his Majesty's commands who so evidently constituted them the judges of its practicability ? Or were they, in complaisance to an information of which the defectiveness could not escape them, especially when they had already found so many parts of it directly *false*, to proceed upon the uncertainty of two or three *ifs*, not one of which made scarce a possibility, to engage their forces beyond a power of retreating, in case of the repulse they had not a single reason not to bespeak, and a thousand to be sure of it.

The M. exclaims against the use of lenitives in failures of military duty, with great justice, no doubt, on his side. But in this case, it is plain, the commander spurned the thought of owing any favor to them : and, at least, as to his part, it is not even quite

quite fair to upbraid him with his having the benefit of them, when he previously and solemnly disdained it.

The M. says, that, on this occasion, "The enemies of the government seize the opportunity to spread insinuations against the propriety and practicability of the measure." And why not the friends of it? Is it then become a criterion of loyalty, to believe that the minister could not commit a mistake, and that it is better to put half a dozen innocent gentlemen to an ignominious death, rather than that his infallibility should be questioned? Or is the government to stand or fall, according to the notion that shall prevail of it.

If it is notorious, "That there is a lurking faction, which labored hard to carry their point in the court-martial." Let infamy attend that faction, it deserves it. But what is that to the commander of the expedition, who, it is plain, never rested the issue of his cause upon either faction, intrigue or favor, but purely on the justice of it? His defence is before the public,

public, and above all, that great and essential part of it, produced by his accusers themselves, the intelligence on which the plan itself was founded, and which if the *best*, as the M. styles it, then certainly bad was the best, for it contains, except the memorial of the forces, nothing but that information of Col. Cl— so evidently vague and defective as to the fortifications; and as to the accessibility of the place so miserably supplemented, by the pilot Thierry's deposition, even admitting it had been a true one, whereas, in fact, it proved false in the most essential points, when it came to the trial. Yet, says the M. Sir Edward Hawke recommended Thierry to the favor of the Minister. He did so; but review the deposition of Sir Edward Hawke, and it will appear why he did so. The man had behaved bravely on board the *Magnanime* at the taking of the Fort of Aix, and was hearty and willing in the service, and Sir Edward's great humanity made him think he deserved encouragement, at least for his good intentions, and in favor of them, excused that ignorance of his, of which he specifies two or three proofs.

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The truth is, that on board the whole fleet, they had not a single pilot that knew any thing of the navigation of the river Charente. Thierry was undoubtedly the best they had, and him, Sir Edward H. calls "*very ignorant.*" But was that the fault of any of the commanders ?

The *Reflexions* at which the M. is pleased to cavil, he says are made up of remnants. I do not clearly understand what is meant by remnants ; but he is certainly right if he means by them, particular parts picked out of the report itself on the enquiry, with the comments that occurred to the writer on them. The vague reports which are objected to him, he gives only as such, nor opposes them in the least to the intelligence of the government ; it is on the foot of that intelligence he reasons. If he mentions the other, it is purely to justify the opinion some had of the expedition the moment its destination was known. The Monitor calls the French militia "a phantom, or at least the invention of a frenchified genius to deter England from attempting to cut out work for the common enemy of Europe  
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“on their own coast.” All of this but the militia’s being his own invention, that writer confesses to be true. He heartily too wishes it was but a phantom, or that we had but such a solid body of militia to oppose to that phantom. As to the deterring England from any attempts on the coast of France, it would have been a great expence, and not a little ridicule spared to it, if it had been deterred in time, from this last one. That nothing under an army of force enough to attempt the conquest of France, can materially hurt it, many have said, and that for a self-evident reason. All its maritime places worth attacking require a regular siege, and what can form a siege with any hopes of success, unless an army sufficient to oppose the French one that would come to its relief? Is there any thing in this so obvious conclusion that implies a frenchified genius? Or that does not rather speak the plain Englishman, who would wish the prevention of his country’s blood and treasure, from being vainly and ridiculously lavished, or its reserving them for more practicable enterprises?

That bold strokes in war are highly commendable, and that even desperate attempts have oftener saved than ruined nations, experience and history concur to establish. The more hazardous the undertaking, consequently the more honorable it is, but that can never suppose a madness so blind, as that of having no certainty at all of the strength of the enemy's forces, nor no knowledge of the place to be attacked. Will the greatest advocate for the plan say there was? That *best* intelligence furnished by the list of the troops, only concludes with a supposition, which were it even a probable one, is at best but a supposition, contradicted by infinitely stronger ones, on the spot; and as to the state of the strength of the town, if one may believe Col. Cl.— who certainly would not exaggerate them: to have marched up an army of eight or ten thousand men, nine or ten miles at least, into that alarmed country, to view those works of it, of which he or they knew so little, and *see* if an escalade could carry them, where there was no such thing as a surprise to favor it, and without artillery, on failing of that,

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to have at least a chance for succeeding by a siege, and that too, depending on another supposition, that the French could not come down with an infinitely superior force, to cut off a retreat, must have been a measure of which not to see the matchless absurdity and folly, or to impute it to a general as a fault the not having proceeded in it, is one more melancholy proof of the prevalence of prejudice and party spirit, over all the powers of common sense, and common candor. Had such an enterprize proceeded from any of the minister's competitors, none of which, by the by, I mean to insinuate are preferable to him, what a flood of scorn and ridicule would not have been poured out upon them? so true it is that popularity, no matter how gained or merited, will acquit of any thing.

Nay there would even on this occasion be great justice in the popularity of the measure at least, if but on account of its presumable good intention, if it was not so much at the expence of so many innocent gentlemen who were demanded as the sacrifices to it; whose fate is surely hard to have their reputation, which



to soldiers especially, ought to be dearer than their lives, called into question upon a point which is itself no question at all.

The M. too seems greatly to mistake, not the meaning indeed of the word Coup-de-main, for in that he is tolerably clear, but its having been attempted to take sanctuary under the definition of that military term. For surely nothing can be more plain *against* the commanders than the extension of it by sir John Ligonier, to even an operation in the course of a regular siege, such as that of Bergen-op-zoom, or of Fort St. Philip. Sir John's advice then was far from countenancing the return of the troops, before they should have sat down before it; and even tried the siege for some time. But what do the commanders say? "The surprize on which  
"the only chance on making a vigorous  
"impression, or a coup-de-main, call it  
"which you please, was evidently over;  
"and as to fitting down before it, we had  
"no artillery. Our plan admitted of  
"none."

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The safety of the Basque-road was not it seems so much as known 'till sir Edward himself made the experiment of it. This is one more proof how defective his prior information had been, which at least supposed the taking the fort of Aix so necessary a preliminary.

"The shore is said to be inaccessible," (says the M.) but whoever said so beside? both land and sea officers plainly declare the contrary, and built on it the resolution of landing the troops, to proceed against that fort Fouras, which had been evidently proved inaccessible by sea. Why did they then retract that resolution? because they found that that measure, which they had resolved on, purely from their ardent wish and desire to do something of service to their country, and of damage to the enemy, before they came away, after the main point had been formally given up, was not one jot the more advisable, for its appearing so practicable. They might indeed have got on shore, but only in such divisions, and with such probability of effectual opposition, that, such an object as the fort Fouras, and it was their only one, could

could by no means have justified the risk. Sir Edward Hawke, who was so far from giving his opinion that the troops should not land at all, that he urged the necessity of it, was however satisfied that fort Fouras was become of no consequence to troops landing in Chatellailon bay; and as no *other* object appeared worth landing for, either to Sir Edward Hawke, who wished it so much, or to the other commanders; what could they do but come away? for as to Rochefort, all of them had concurred in the opinion of its being not to be thought of more. And surely if the admirals were not judges enough of land-operations, to give a thorough weight to that their concurrence, at least being on the spot, their common sense could not be inferior to that of men equally unskilled, who have at a distance so sanguinely condemned that resolution to return. And as to the court-martial, composed of gentlemen of the army, whose military profession made them at least judges of the matter, they have unanimously approved it. But if the sea officers are ignorant, and the land ones partial, from whence can a judgment be admitted? or are none fit to pass

pals and impose one on the public, but the admirers of the plan ?

There is in the said M. a very invidious reflection on that insinuation which he styles " vague and farcaetical, evasive and fallacious," of the fleet's being wanted on more considerable service, and especially to watch the return of the *expected* fleets from Louisbourg and Martinico. But, surely, the little or nothing that obviously remained to be done against Fouras, was not an object for keeping the fleet longer upon that coast. It could not be worse to set it at liberty to proceed on important and real service, than to detain it in fruitless attendance on an imaginary one.

As to that great pretended informality of suppression of the minutes of the council of the 28th; all that appears to solve it, is, that the great point of the expedition against Rochefort being over, they did not deign to do so minute and inconsiderable an object as Fouras, the honor of holding a council about it. At least, there does not appear the shadow of any ill-design or unfair dealing being assignable to the unanimous resolutions of the commanders, for

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no minutes to be taken of that part of their procedure, to the insignificance of which, the report on the Enquiry has done but justice, and of which themselves were probably conscious and ashamed, though they had suffered their judgment to be carried away by their eagerness to do at least something ; or by what is yet a greater reproach to them, the fear of that unpopularity, they ought to have had the courage to despise, since they might be sure of not deserving it.

The M. concludes with a kind of threat of a parliamentary enquiry into every part of this transaction. I fancy, if the commanders have any fear at all about it, it is of its not taking place. Of this, I am sure, they could not but be greatly obliged to the interest or influence that should promote it.

Injured, cruelly injured as they have been by the popular clamor so unfairly excited against them, the representatives of the people would, probably, even but on the principles of common humanity and justice, grant them all the reparation in their power, or that they should be found  
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to deserve. At least there can be no doubt of their clearly discovering, " whether it " was an *impracticable* or *unadvisable* " scheme of the *Ministry*, or the *bad con-* " *duct* of those entrusted with the *execu-* " *tion* of his Majesty's commands," which has brought the nation into the *present* disgrace.

**F I N I S.**



